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Private Thoughts UPON RELIGION,

In Several

LETTERS.

Written to

His Royal Highness the Duke Regent of *France.*

By the

Archbishop of *CAMBRAY.*

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GR. III.
BR. MUS.

To the Honourable

Sir Berkeley Lucy, *Bar^t.*

SIR,

HAVING *frequently had the Honour of conversing with You upon the Sublime Subjects contained in the following Pages, and always*

of coming away improved;
knowing besides the great
Value You entertain for the
Memory of the Illustrious
AUTHOR *and his* WORKS,
I only wanted an Oportunity
of publickly professing the
high Esteem I have for
Your uncommon Merit and
Penetration in Philosophi-
Studies as well as in all o-
ther Sciences, being fully
convinced that a fitter Pa-
tron for this Performance
than Your self could not be
chosen in the learned World.

You

DEDICATION.

Your Goodneſs is ſuch, hat I queſtion not, but You will forgive this Liberty, nd not refuſe me the Con- inuation of the Honour I m the moſt ambitious of, hat is, to ſubſcribe myſelf with the utmoſt Attachment, Sincerity, and Reſpect,

SIR,

Your Honour's

moſt obedient,

moſt humble, and

moſt devoted Servant,

J. DELACOSTE.

TO
His ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE
DUKE REGENT
OF
FRANCE.

May it pleaſe Your Grace,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS was graciouſly pleaſed at the ſame time, to acquaint me, That the Birth of *ſome of theſe Letters* was due to you, and to grant me the Honour of laying them in this publick manner at Your Feet.

DEDICATION.

WHAT in the Eyes of the World could I do more advantagious to the Memory of their AUTHOR, than to shew them the great Trust Your HIGHNESS honoured him with in his Life-time, and that Your HIGHNESS still protects his WRITINGS after his decease? All things therefore concur to determine me to offer *the whole* to Your HIGHNESS.

THE deep Sciences therein contained are so much

much within the reach of the ſuperior Judgment and uncommon Knowledge of Your ROYAL HIGHNESS; that the ableſt Writers may be proud of Your HIGHNESS's Sentiments, independent of Your Illuſtrious Birth and great Rank in the World. I am therefore fully aſſured, that this Treatiſe will meet with a general Reception, ſince that part of it which Your HIGHNESS has peruſed, has

had Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's Approbation. And I think myſelf highly indebted to Your HIGHNESS for the Leave of expreſſing upon this Occaſion with how much Gratitude, Zeal, Fidelity and Reſpect, I am.

May it pleaſe Your Highneſs,

Your Royal Highneſs's

moſt humble, and

moſt obedient Servant,

FENELON.

THE

Abbot DE FENELON'S

PREFACE.

THE *Exiſtence of an Infinitely Perfect Being; an happy Immortality in the Admiration of his Greatneſs; a Worſhip conſiſting in the Love of what is moſt perfectly Amiable; are ſuch noble and comfortable Ideas, that we ought to wiſh them true, al-*

though it were impossible for us to demonstrate the Truth of them. They raise Man above himself, by causing him to return all to the Godhead. When he beholds himself with relation to the Supreme Being, he sees himself like a, Nothing, *which ought always to disappear and forget itself before that Immense* All: *But when he reflects upon himself, as on the Image of the Godhead, and the Object of his Complacency, all Created Beings fly away from before him as being unworthy to be the End of his Love. And thus seeing together his own Littleness and his Greatness, he hum-*

bles

bles himself without Meanness, and raises himself without Pride. All the Evils and Pleasures of this transitory Life appear to him like so many Illusions of a Dream. He takes the Sufferings and Adversities for wholsome Remedies to cleanse and prepare him for boundless Happiness. He looks on Riches and Greatness, as Means given him for no other End, than to make his Fellow Creatures happy, by imitating God's Communicative Goodness. Whatever happens he always thinks it the best, because he loves that Supream Will, which regulates and disposes of all things with Wisdom;

and

and that Love ſoftens all his Pains, and turns his Sorrows into Joy. He loves all other Men like his Brethren ſprung from the ſame Origin, and deſign'd for the ſame Happineſs. He doth not think himſelf an Independent Being, Created for his own Sake, but a very Small Parcel of an All, *that compoſes human kind; a Member of the ſame Family, whoſe general Good he ought to prefer to his own private Intereſt. It is thus that the Belief of what Religion teaches us, renders Man noble in all his Paſſions, lovely in Society, generous in his whole Conduct,*

and

and peacable in all his Undertakings.

Unbelief on the contrary debaſes and ſtraitens the Soul, deſtroys in Man all thoſe great Sentiments and generous Ideas. It cauſes him to refer all to himſelf. He loves and eſteems no Body, but in as much as they are ſubſervient to his unruly Paſſions. Friendſhip, Generoſity, all other Virtues, which render Society ſure, eaſy, and amiable, ſubſiſt no longer than he finds his own Account by them. Every Man's Self-Love is continually up in Arms againſt that of his Neighbour. The Happineſs of one Man,

cauſes

cauſes the Unhappineſs of a thouſand. Ambition, Jealouſy, Hatred, Avarice, and Contrariety of Tempers, render Life uncomfortable, and a Burthen. All human Life appears to us but a ſad Picture, a general Confuſion, a monſtrous Medley of contrary and inconſiſtent Paſſions; and the Expectation of another Life, which makes us bear patiently the Misfortunes of this, is a thing unknown to the Unbeliever. *His tranſient Pleaſures are continually diſturb'd by the troubleſome Fear that haunts him,* That poſſibly there may be a future State. *And*

in this Uncertainty, which is the worſt of Evils, his Self-Love, an Enemy to himſelf through an Exceſs of Madneſs, finds a ſhelter againſt his Terrors no where but in the Idea of his Annihilation, and in the total Deſtruction of what is ſo dear to him; of that ſelf *which is his Idol, and to which he ſacrifices all. What a Difference betwixt thoſe two Syſtems! What Compariſon between the Pictures of the* Righteous *and the* Unbeliever: *If Religion is a Romance it is a moſt charming, and a pleaſing one.*

But

But thanks to the ſupream Wiſdom; his Truths are not only lovely and comfortable; They are moreover evident and demonſtrable. There are two ways of proving them. One by dry and abſtracted Arguments, too refin'd and intricate for the greateſt part of Mankind. Thoſe Demonſtrations may convict the Underſtanding *by their Evidence, but the* Will *is neither amended nor alter'd by them.*

There are another ſort of Proofs, which operate on the Soul of Man, Give him a Taſte of Truth at the very Sight of it, and which unite clear

Know-

Knowledge *and* noble Paſſions. *Such is the Character of the following* Letters. *They were written by a* Prelate *who endeavour'd to make Men at the ſame time* Chriſtians *and* Philoſophers. *No leſs a Performance could have been acceptable to thoſe they were directed to. The* GREAT PRINCE *who was the Occaſion of ſome of theſe* LETTERS, *poſſeſſed that Superiority of Knowledge and Genius, which render'd uſeleſs all other Helps to Demonſtrations purely Metaphyſical. They could not eſcape his penetrating Eye. There was need of Proofs capable*

pable of intereſting a great Soul. Proofs ſo much the more convincing, as they are ſimple, open, convincing Proofs, I ſay, whoſe Evidence is no ways obſcured by attacking them, which Men even ſuppoſe true in the bottom and ſecret Corners of their Hearts, whilſt their Underſtanding labours in vain to doubt of them.

This is the true Import of this Treatiſe.

FENELON.

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Private Thoughts
UPON
RELIGION;
In ſeveral
LETTERS.

LETTER I.

Of the Being of a God: Of the Worſhip worthy of Him; and of the True Church.

SIR,

YOU need not have made the leaſt Apology for the length of your two Letters; they have both Edified and Moved me: I perceive in 'em the moſt extenſive Can-

dour and ſincere Love for Truth, a ſol
licitous Care to find it, a great Zeal fo
Religion, and a Confidence you put in m
Willingneſs to aſſiſt you therein. 'Ti
true, I ſeem ſometimes reſolv'd to con
cern my ſelf with nothing but what m
Function immediately requires at m
Hands; yet, I am none of thoſe ſtarch
Bigots, who ſtart at Shadows, and ar
Scandaliz'd at every Trifle: I am alway
ready to examine into any Syſtem, or t
hear any Objections propos'd: It woul
be impoſſible to eſtabliſh any thing Soli
if Perſons zealous for Religion did no
freely, and without fear of ſiniſter Inte
pretations communicate to each other th
captious Arguments by which ſome at
tempt to darken it. What makes m
uneaſy, is, That I perceive you Wro
when under a feaveriſh Indiſpoſition;
was in the ſame Condition when I rea
your Letter, which has yet left me ver
Weak: My Phyſicians forbid me a
Things that require Application o
Mind; yet, I cannot ſee which way
is poſſible to Anſwer you, without wr
ting a whole Volume: Why can't I b
in your Cloſet with you, and in perfe
Health *impertranſito medio* as the Schoo
men call it, But being, as I hope, on th
mendin

nending Hand, I ſhall now take the Liberty of repreſenting to you my Thoughts upon divers Points.

1ſt. I have not as yet read the Preface, which you have ſeen: The Author of it is a Man of great Capacity, for whom I have a Value: But abſtracted-y from what it contains I own, That he Syſtem of *Spinoſa* ſeems to me eaſily overthrown; as ſoon as it is attack'd n any Side, it's pretended Chain breaks ſunder. According to that *Philoſopher*, wo Men, (one of which ſays *Yes*; the ther *No*: The one is in the *Wrong*, the ther in the *Right*; The one is a *Villain*, he other a very *Virtuous* Good Man) are ut one individual Being. This is what defy any Man in his right Senſes o believe true in Practice. The Sect f *Spinoſiſts* therefore are a Sect of *Lyars*, nd not *Philoſophers*. Beſides, 'tis not oſſible to know the Quality of a Thing, ut as far as you know already the thing Qualified. 'Tis neceſſary to know a co-our'd Body to conceive a Colour; a move-ble Body to conceive the Motion there-f, *&c.* So that *Spinoſa* ſhould firſt of all ive us an Idea of that infinite Subſtance, hich in its ſimple and indiviſible Being, econciles the moſt oppoſite Modifica-

tions or Qualities, one of which is the Negative of the other; he muſt find an infinite Multiplication in a perfect Unity; he muſt ſhew Variations and Limits in a Being which is invariable and unlimited. Thoſe are Enormous Contradictions.

2*dly*. The Modiſh *Free-Thinkers* of our Times, do not embrace the Syſtem of *Spinoſa*. They value themſelves upon their owning a *God* Creator of all Things, whoſe Wiſdom ſhines in all his Works. But according to them this God cou'd not be accounted Good or Wiſe, if he had given Man a Free Will; that is, the Power of Sinning, to run Aſtray from his propos'd End, to overthrow Order, and loſe himſelf eternally. According to them, Man impoſes on himſelf, when he fancies he is Maſter of his Choice between two Contraries. This flattering Illuſion, ſay they, proceeds from the Will of Man's being incapable of conſtraint in its proper Act, which is its Volition. I cannot be determin'd by any thing but its Pleaſure, which is its only Spring. Between different Objects of Pleaſure, it is always the ſtrongeſt, that invincibly and infallibly determines it. So that it never

Willeth, but what pleaſeth it moſt to Will. This, in my Opinion, forms a Liberty which is no better than a ridiculous Chimera. Man, ſay they, is conſtantly neceſſitated to Will one ſingle Object, as much from the inward Diſpoſition of his Organs, as from the Circumſtances of external Objects on every Occaſion: He fancies that he chuſes, whilſt he is compell'd to Will always that, which preſents it ſelf to him in the moſt pleaſing Form: According to this Syſtem, by taking away all real Liberty, Man is neither liable to Praiſe or Diſpraiſe, and conſequently is freed from all apprehenſions of Hell. He admires God without fearing him, and lives without Remorſe, following the Impulſe of his Paſſions. This is the Syſtem which Charms all the Libertines of our Days.

3*dly*. You are much in the Right to require ſuch Motives for believing Religion, as are proportion'd to the ſimpleſt and the meaneſt Underſtandings. The difficulty of finding Reaſons thus Proportion'd, and yet Convincing, tempts you to believe, That God deſigns Salvation to ſuch Elect only, whom he draws to him, more by moving their

Hearts than their Underſtandings; mor
by the powerful Influence of his Grac
than by the Light of Reaſon. But pra
obſerve two Inconveniencies in this Sy
ſtem: The Firſt is, If it be granted
That Faith is given to Man by the Af
fections only, without the help of Rea
ſon, and by the blind Inſtinct of Grac
without a rational Diſcernment of th
Authority to which he ſubmits, to be
lieve the Myſteries of Religion, it wou
make *Chriſtianity* a mere *Phanaticiſm*, an
all *Chriſtians* bare *Enthuſiaſts*. Nothi
cou'd be more dangerous for the qui
and happineſs of Societies and Mankin
Nothing can render Religion more de
picable or hateful.

The Second Inconveniency is, Th
according to this Syſtem, it wou'd b
true, That God damns almoſt all Ma
kind, becauſe they do not believe, and d
not keep all his Commandments; a
though it were equally impoſſible fo
'em to believe or keep thoſe Comman
ments for want of Helps to believe, a
fulfill his Will proportion'd to their Want
To give an Idea of it ſo contrary to th
Goodneſs of God, would render Reli
gion ſcandalous, and raiſe all Mankin
againſt it.

4*thly.* St. *Auſtin*, who cannot be charg-
d of having been too looſe in any of
he Points relating to God's Grace,
as thought, That he could not juſtify
he Goodneſs and Juſtice of God, againſt
he blaſphemous Imputations of the
Manichei; but by avowing, That no
Man *is beholden* to God for any Thing,
ut *for what he has actually receiv'd from*
im. From whence he infers two Things;
ne is, That every Man has receiv'd
previous Help, and proportion'd to his
Occaſions, to overcome the Temptati-
ns of his Concupiſcence, to avoid all
Evil, and to practiſe what is Good,
conſonant to his Underſtanding. The
ther, That he has receiv'd Talents
herewith to vanquiſh his Ignorance, *in*
eeking with Care and Piety, if he wills it,
whatever he wants to move him to be-
ief; in which Caſe, Providence would
urniſh him with ſuitable Means to
come nearer and nearer to the Faith of
Myſteries, to the Virtues of the Goſpel,
nd the Means of Salvation. The in-
ternal, as well as the external Means of
Providence, are inexpreſſible, and of an
infinite Variety, according to that Fa-
ther of the Church. It is as impoſſible
o explain 'em at large, as it is impoſſible

to deſcribe how a Man by different Steps is arriv'd to a certain Degree of Wiſdom and Virtue, or to the oppoſite Defects and Prejudices, *&c.* One reaches thither by the innumerable Variety and Combinations of Education, Example, Reading, Converſation, Friends, Experience, Reflection, and by internal Inſpirations; by which latter, God inſenſibly operates on the Soul. It would not only be impoſſible for other Men to be very particular in aſſigning the Reaſons which have moved another Man to a certain Courſe of Life, but even that Man himſelf could hardly afterwards trace his Way back again, and give a Detail of all the Motives which from within and without have been the Springs that determin'd his Affections in his Choice. That which every one cannot do for himſelf, will be God's Task at the Day of Judgment. He will there obtain the Victory, becauſe he will unfold to every one all the ſecret Corners of his Heart, in a Chain of Means, by which it was in his own Power to ſeek, and to know Truth, to love, to follow it, and therein to find his Salvation. Theſe Means, though not to be explain'd ſingly, are yet very ſure all together; their Variety, their

ſecret

ſecret Combination, their eaſily dropping out of our Memories, do often bereave us of the diſtinct Knowledge thereof: But then doth not God, who is infinitely Juſt and Good, deſerve to be credited about the Concatenation, and the Proportion of thoſe Means which he has prepar'd? Is he not a better Judge of them than our ſelves, ſince we neglect thoſe Means ſo far as ſcarce ever to regard 'em? If Man upon waking from his Sleep, found himſelf on a ſudden in a Defart Iſle, What prodigious Pains would he take to find out, if poſſible, by what Hazard he had been carry'd thither? We come into this World all on a Sudden, as fall'n from the Skies; we neither know what we are, nor whence we came, nor whither we are come, nor with whom we live, nor whither we ſhall go, upon our Departure from hence. Who is it that ſheweth the leaſt Curioſity in this important Myſtery? No body cares to unravel it. We amuſe our ſelves with every Thing; we want to know all Things, except the only One, which above all Things concerns us. This monſtrous Lazineſs is the great Sin of Unbelief. *Non Pié quærunt*, ſaith St. *Auſtin.* What would not Men be capable of, if they were ſincere, humble,

docile, and as diligent in the Enquiry as ſo great a Good deſerves. Do not Children in a very ſhort Time learn to diſtinguiſh, and to name Things of a common or a neceſſary Uſe in Life, and even a whole Language? Do not the rude and booriſh People acquire the Nicety of all Mechanical Arts? That is not all: How ſubtile and profound is Man in his ſearch after Evil! His Underſtanding ſeems no where defective, but in his Application to what is Good. He is only dull in thoſe Things which he doth not affect. Love Truth as you love Money, and you ſhall come at the Bottom of the darkeſt Things. Whenever God ſhall lay before Man all the Natural Endowments of Reaſon, and all the Supernatural Helps granted him to believe; when he ſhall demonſtrate, That thoſe Gifts would have procured him ſtill greater toward his Salvation, if he had not neglected the Firſt; then will he at one View behold all thoſe Things to which he was blind here below. And although this Juſtice of God ſhould be incomprehenſible, yet ought we to believe it, without comprehending the ſame. But Man rather chuſeth to flatter himſelf, ſhake off the Yoke, ſuppoſe that God is wanting to him, di-

put

pute about his Free-Will; though he can-
not be in earneſt in his Doubts, and to
ive without Law or Rule, juſtifying ſuch
is Conduct, by laying the Blame upon
he Almighty.

5*thly*. It is true, That it is neceſſary to
roduce Proofs proportion'd to the weak
nd groſs Apprehenſion of almoſt all
Mankind to bring 'em under that Autho-
ity which propoſeth Myſteries to 'em,
s the Subject of their Faith. But let
s obſerve two Things; one is, That
he moſt narrow and dull Underſtand-
ng acquires Strength, and opens in Pro-
portion as it delights in Things, which
t has occaſion to know and penetrate in-
o. The other, That we ought to diſtin-
guiſh between that Knowledge which
pprehends and retains the Idea of Truth,
nd that which enables Man to go to the
Bottom of it, and to confute all the vain
ubtleties that may cloud that Truth,
which is clear and naked in it ſelf. It is not
eceſſary that every Clown ſhou'd appre-
end Religion, ſo well as to anſwer and
lear up all the Difficulties, which Pride
r the Paſſions caſt about it. It is ſuffi-
ient, That the Unlearn'd believe what
s true, upon a true Argument; though
t be but implicitly known to him. If

you

you reaſon with a Husbandman about the plaineſt Subjects of Agriculture, you'll certainly puzzle him, he will not be able to anſwer you; but for all that, you ſhall not put him out of his right Way, and he'll continue to plough and manure his Lands in the ſame certain Method. This is the Caſe of the Unlearn'd, as to Religion.

6thly. It is ſome time ſince I thought it neceſſary to form a Plan, containing Proofs of the Truths neceſſary to Salvation, and thoſe all together, really concluding to the Purpoſe, and proportion'd to the Capacity of the Illiterate. I formerly requeſted this very earneſtly of a great Prelate. He often promis'd it me. I could wiſh my ſelf capable of performing it. This Treatiſe ought to be very ſhort tho' ſuch an Undertaking at large would require not only a great Labour, but alſo great Talents to execute it rightly. No thing requires a greater Genius, than a Work wherein the Author is to level all the great and exalted Truths, to the Capacity of thoſe that have no Genius at all. To ſucceed therein, one muſt reach every Thing, and at the ſame Time make a Comprehenſion of the two Oppoſite Extreams of Mankind. One muſt be un-

derſtood

derſtood by the Illiterate, and at the ſame time Confute the bold Criticiſms of Men who make an ill Uſe of their Parts againſt Truth. I can at preſent give you but a very looſe and defective Idea of that Plan; but what I ſhall lay down of it in Haſte, and for our Private Uſe, is without any Conſequence; you'll eaſily conceive more of it than what I can ſet down in a few Lines; and ſee here rather a Table of Contents than an Explanation of the *Argument*.

A Proof of the Three Principal Heads necessary to Salvation, which ought to Subject to the Yoke of Faith the Weak and Illiterate, without Examination.

ARTICLE I.

There is a God infinitely Perfect, who has Created the Universe.

THere is need only of opening our Eyes, and to shake off all Prejudices, to perceive without Reasoning the Power and Wisdom of the Creator, which shines in all his Works. If the most learned Man opposes this Truth, I shall not enter into an Argument with him; I shall only desire of him the Liberty to Suppose; That a Storm has cast him on a Desart Isle; where he finds a House of the best Architecture, richly Furnish'd, adorn'd with Pictures of the greatest Masters: he goes into a Study where

where he finds a numerous Collection of good Books artfully ranged in their particular Claſſes; yet he meets with no Man in that whole Iſland; it behoves me only to ask him, whether it be meer Chance, without any Induſtry, which has produced all he beholds. I dare defy him with his utmoſt Endeavours ever to ſatisfy himſelf, That ſo vaſt a Number of Stones, ſo artfully diſpoſed, the rich Furniture ſo aptly contrived, ſo well proportion'd to the Structure, and decently placed; That thoſe Pictures which ſo finely imitate Nature, thoſe Books which ſo exactly treat upon the moſt ſublime Subjects and Sciences were only a pure accidental Combination: That ingenious Man may perhaps find out ſome Subtleties to maintain the Speculative Part of this abſurd Paradox; But in Practice, he'll find it impoſſible to entertain any doubt about the Induſtry that ſhines out in that Building. If he ſhou'd boaſt of his being doubtful in it, you may Swear he believes his own Conſcience. That *Incapacity of Doubting*, is rightly call'd *a full Conviction*: And here you may in a manner, ſee the utmoſt Limits of Human Reaſon; it can go no farther. This Compariſon demonſtrates, how we cannot

cannot but be convinc'd of the Being of a God, when we look upon this Universe. Can any Body doubt that this Great Work doth not shew infinitely more Art than the House just mention'd? The difference between a *Philosopher* and a *Labourer* consists in this, that the latter doth immediately embrace and follow with Simplicity that which strikes his Eye-Sight; whereas the *Philosopher*, seduced by his vain Prejudices, employs all the Subtlety of his Reasoning to confound his own Reason. Behold then and see here the Being of a God set in its truest Light for every one in his own Senses, who is intent, and free of Pride and Passion, far from having occasion for Reasoning, all he has to fear is his subtle Reason; he has no more Cause to meditate for the finding of a God at the sight of the Universe, than to suppose the Watch-maker present at the sight of a Watch, or the Architect, when he sees a House.

ARTICLE II.

Chriſtianity only is a Worſhip worthy of God, or becoming him.

IT is the Chriſtian Religion only whoſe *Eſſential* Part is, *The Love of God.* Other Religions were grounded on *the Fear of the Gods*, who were to be appeaſed and courted for their Favours, at the Expence of ſolemn Adorations, Prayers and Offerings. But Chriſtianity, inſtituted by *Jeſus Chriſt*, obliges us to love God above our ſelves, and to love our ſelves only for his Sake. The *Paradiſe* it ſelf, promis'd us as a Reward, is to be *perfect and eternal Love.* It requireth Self-denial, *abneget ſe ipſum*, which excludes all Self-love, to bring us to love our ſelves through Charity, as ſomething to which God has a proper Claim, and which he bids us love in him. This overturning of the whole Man, is the re-

re-production of Order, and the Birth of the New Man. This is what the industry of Man cou'd not have found out. 'Twas necessary that a Superior Power should turn Man against himself, to force him to pronounce that thundring Sentence against his Self-love. Nothing is so evidently just, and yet nothing checks so violently the very Soul of Man, who is his own Idol. 'Tis impossible to honour God sufficiently, but by that Supream Love. *Nec colitur ille nisi amando*, saith St. *Austin* in many Places. How cometh it then, that almost all Men have herein been mistaken? Instead of Offering, and Sacrificing *themselves*, they have carried to the Altar Burnt Offerings, Incense, and other Gifts. Tell the most simple and ignorant Man, that we must Love God the Father, who has Created us for his Sake. This immediately enters his Heart, unless Pride and Self-Love make him Rebel; he has no occasion to hear Debates and Particulars upon the Argument, he instantly is sensible that therein is contain'd the whole Sum of Religion: Now, this Worship he can only find in Christianity; so that there is no Room either for Choice or Deliberation; *all other Worship is no Religion*

The Religion of the *Jews* is but an Introduction, or rather but a Sketch or Shadow of that promis'd Worship. Take away from the Law of *Moſes* the coarſe-thread Figures, temporal Bleſſings, fat of the Earth, celeſtial Dew, myſterious Promiſes, Infirmities diſpenc'd with, or tolerated, and the legal Ceremonies, there will remain *The Beginning of Chriſtianity only.* Chriſtianity is nothing elſe than the Overthrow of the *Idolatry of Self-Love*, and the Eſtabliſhment of the true Worſhip of God by Supreme Love. Enquire narrowly, you'll meet with this true Worſhip, Unfolded, Purified, and Perfect, no where but among *Chriſtians.* They alone know that God deſerves eternal Love. I do not mention the *Turks*, they do not deſerve it; their Religion is no more than the Coarſeſt, moſt Servile and entirely Mercenary Part of the Worſhip of the moſt Carnal *Jews*, to which they have added the Admiration of a *Falſe Prophet*, who owns himſelf that he had no certain Proof of his being One. Whoever is upright, and poor of Spirit, can only abide with *Chriſtians*, becauſe it is only among them he can meet with perfect Love. As ſoon as he has found it

it there, he has found all he wanted, and is ſenſible, that there is nothing more left for him to ſeek. The Myſteries do not ſcare him; he conceives, that ſince all Nature is impenetrable to his weak Underſtanding, he ought not to be ſurpriſed at his not apprehending all the Secrets of God; his very Weakneſs makes him ſtrong, his Darkneſs doth enlighten him, to make him diſtruſtful of himſelf, and docile in God. He doth not ſcruple to believe that God, who is infinite Love, has vouchſafed to come himſelf in a Body like unto Ours, to temperate the Rays of his Glory, to teach us to love, and to love himſelf within us. It is in this Senſe true, that true Religion is diſcern'd by the Heart, and not by the Underſtanding. In reality one finds it nakedly or merely through the Love of God worthy of infinite Love, not through the ſubtle Reaſonings of *Philoſophers*. *Socrates* himſelf had found next to nothing; whereas now an humble poor Woman, or a docile Mechanick finds all by finding Love, *Confiteor tibi Pater*, &c. The Love of God decides all without farther Diſpute, in Favour of *Chriſtianity*. It is in that Senſe

Tertullian

Tertullian ſaith, That the Soul *is* Naturally Chriſtian.

N. B. *The Author is here ſomewhat in a Rapture, and ſpeaks the Language of the* Quietiſts *or* Pietiſts, *for which he incurr'd a Cenſure from* Rome.

ARTICLE III.

None but the Catholick Church can teach this Worſhip, in a Manner proportion'd to the Occaſions of all Mankind.

ALL Men, but more eſpecially the Illiterate, have need of an Authority to determine, without engaging them into Enquiries aud Debates, of which they are manifeſtly incapable. How can it be expected that Peaſants, and ſuch as are oblig'd to get their Bread by their Labour, ſhou'd examine

mine the Original Texts, the different Editions and Tranſlations, and fix the Meanings of the Bible? God might be thought to have been wanting to the Occaſions of almoſt all Mankind, if he had not aſſign'd 'em an infallible Authority to ſave 'em, that impoſſible *Examen*, and to prevent their being led into Errors. The *illiterate Man* therefore, who knows the Goodneſs of God, and is ſenſible of his own Inability, ought to ſuppoſe ſuch an Authority given by God, and humbly ſeek it, to ſubmit thereunto without reaſoning. Where ſhall he find that? All Societies ſeparated from the Catholick Church, do ground their Separation upon their offering Liberty to every individual Man, to judge for himſelf, about the Senſe of the Scriptures; and by pretending to ſhow him that the Bible doth contradict that Ancient Church. The firſt Step therefore, which a private Man ought to take, before he hearkens to thoſe Sectaries, is, to make himſelf the Judge between them and the Church, which they have forſook. Now where is that ſenſible Ruſtick, in his own Affairs, who without a ridiculous and ſcandalous Preſumption, can ſay, I am going to examine, Whether the Ancient Church

ha

has well or ill interpreted the Bible. Yet this is the eſſential Point, and true Cauſe of the Separation of the Branches from the Old Stem. Every illiterate Man who is ſenſible of his Ignorance, ought to have an Averſion to that Act of Preſumption which makes him begin thus. He looks out for an Authority which may ſave him that Piece of Preſumption, and in the Trouble of that *Examen* of which he is incapable. All the new Sects, according to their fundamental Principle, call to him, Read, Reaſon, and then judge. The Catholick Church only tells him, Do not Reaſon, do not Judge, be ſatisfy'd to be taught, be humble; God has promis'd me his Spirit to preſerve you from Errors. Which of the two ſhall this poor illiterate Man hearken to? Thoſe who require Impoſſibilities of him, or thoſe who promiſe him what is moſt ſuitable to his Weakneſs, and worthy the Goodneſs of his Maker: Let us behold a Paralytic, who wants to get out of his Bed, becauſe his Houſe is on fire; he addreſſes five People, who tell him, You muſt Riſe, run away, pierce the Crowd, and get you gone out of the Flames; but at laſt he perceives a ſixth, who tells him, Be not afraid, truſt in

me,

me, I'll carry you off my ſelf, upon my Back: Shall he believe the five, who adviſe him to what he knows himſelf is impracticable? Shall he not rather believe him, who promiſes that Aſſiſtance which he knows proportion'd and ſufficient to his Occaſion and Weakneſs? Without any farther Deliberation, he gives himſelf up to that Man, and reſolves to be quiet and governable in his Boſom. This is exactly the Caſe of an humble illiterate Man; he cannot ſeriouſly liſten to thoſe Sects, who wou'd have him Read, Reaſon and Judge, becauſe he finds himſelf incapable of any of 'em; but he is comforted, when he hears the Ancient Church ſay to him, Be ſenſible of your own Weakneſs, humble your ſelf, be compliant, truſt in the Goodneſs of God, who has not left us without the Means, and ſuitable Aſſiſtance of going to him; let me alone, I'll carry you in my Boſom: Nothing is eaſier, no Way ſhorter than this, to arrive at Truth. The illiterate Man has Occaſion for neither Book nor Reaſoning to find out the True Church. With his Eyes ſhut, he knows for certain, That all thoſe Churches, who would make him his own Judge, are Falſe; and that only

nly that can be the true one, which ids him believe with humble Submiſ-ion. Inſtead of Books and Reaſoning, e wants nothing but his own Weak-eſs and the Goodneſs of God, to a-oid being ſeduc'd by flattering Inſinu-tions, and to remain in the ſtate of an umble Compliance. He wants only o be rightly ſenſible of his Ignorance o be determin'd: This Ignorance ſtands im in ſtead of infallible Science. The ore ignorant he is, the more doth his gnorance tell him how abſurd thoſe ects are, who would ſet him up for a dge of Things he is not able ſo much s to examine. On the other Hand, e Learned themſelves have numberleſs ccaſions of being humble and ſenſible f their own Inabilities. The more ey Reaſon, the more they Doubt, ven more than the Illiterate; they diſ-ute among themſelves for ever, and ow obſtinate and tenacious of the moſt bſurd Doctrines. So that they have as uch Occaſion, as the moſt ignorant eople, for a Supream Authority, to umble their Preſumption, amend their rejudices, determine their Diſputes, fix eir Uncertainties, reconcile 'em to ach other, and unite 'em with the

Multitude. That Authority Superio to all Reaſoning, where ſhall we fin it? It cannot be in any of thoſe Sects which are form'd only by cauſing Me to Reaſon, and making them Judges o the Scripture above the Church. I cannot therefore be found any whe but in that ancient Church, which i call'd the *Catholick Church.* What is mor ſimple, ſhorter, more adapted to th weak Underſtandings of the Vulgar tha a Deciſion? For the apprehending o which, there is only need of fee ing one's Ignorance, and not to attemp Impoſſibilities. Abandon that *Exam* which is viſibly impoſſible to you, an a ridiculous Conceit, and you'll find yo ſelf immediately a good *Catholick.*

I apprehend very well, *Sir,* That in numerable Difficulties will be ſtarte at what I have here laid down: But ar there none raiſed to make us doubt th very Being of Bodies, and queſtion th Certainty of Things we really behol which we hear and feel every Momen as if our whole Life was but the illu ſion of a Dream? I dare aver, that i the three Principles I have laid down enough will be found to diſſipate all Ob jections in a few Words, and withou

entrin

ntring into any intricate or ſubtle Debates.

Yet I cannot end this Letter, *Sir*, ithout intimating, That you do not em to have a ſufficient value for St. *uſtin*. 'Tis true, That Father wrote an Age of a very indifferent Taſte; is Style ſhews it; he has wrote with-ut any Order, haſtily, with a Luxu-ancy of Thought, and chiefly when e was urged to it by his Occaſions of ſtructing, or refuting his Adverſaries. *lato* and *Deſcartes*, whom you ſo high-value, had Leiſure to meditate with-ut Diſturbance, and bring their Works o Perfection: Yet have thoſe two Au-ors their Failings: For Example: hat can be more Weak than the Proofs hich *Socrates* alledges for the Immor-lity of the Soul?

Beſides, is he not wavering and unfix'd out ſome of the moſt fundamental ruths, without the Certainty of which is moral Precepts loſe their Aim? hat is more defective than the infinite orld of *Deſcartes*? If a Collection was ade of all the true Sayings of St. *Auſtin*, attered looſely throughout his Works, here would be more *Metaphyſicks* found han in thoſe two Authors. I cannot

ceaſe to admire the Extent, the Clear
neſs and Fertility of that ſublime Ge
nius.

I wiſh, *Sir*, I could be for one Mont
with you in a loneſome Place, where w
might have nothing elſe to do but t
ſearch together what might feed an
edify our Souls. *O Rus, Quando ego*
aſpiciam, quandoque Licebit, &c.

No Body can honour you with mo
lively Sentiments and more worthy
you, than I ſhall do the Remainder
my Days.

OBSERVATION.

*The main Argument of this Chapter ha
been anſwered by many able Hands; yet
cannot forbear ſaying, That our Auth
ſeems to conceal the true ſtate of the Queſti
between the Church of* Rome *and the* Pro
teſtants; *which is not, whether the Illitera
are adviſed to Read, to Examine, and
Judge for themſelves, though the Adviſers kno
them to be Uncapable, which indeed woul
be ridiculous; But whether any one or mo
People are inveſted with an infallible, an i
reſiſtable Authority, not only to inſtruct the I
literate, but to lay an Obligation on all Chri
ſtian*

ians of all ranks and degrees of Knowledge, embrace and believe without Examen or ontroul what they pronounce to be the Doctrines of the Church, enforcing them with Severities and Threats of Puniſhments both in his World and the next. The latter our Author durſt not ſay; he was too honeſt a Man to go ſuch Lengths, beſides that his Catholick Church was not very diſtant from our roteſtant Church. Thoſe that know the Hiſtory of his Life will eaſily forgive him not have ſpoke plainer, for the Court of Paris ad their Eyes upon him as well as the Court f Rome.

Beſides, Obſerve, That in the Antitheſis etween the Proteſtants and the Catholick hurch, which contains on the Proteſtant ide an Exhortation to Read, Examine and udge; and on the Side of the Church of ome a Diſſuaſion from it, That he omits diſſuade 'em from Reading, though he adiſes 'em not to preſume to Examine, or to udge. Since he was only ſpeaking to the Illirate, he might as well have added Reading; ut he was Tender, leaſt he ſhould be thought be againſt any of the Laity's Reading the ible: On the Contrary he was of the ſame entiments with the famous Mr. Du Pin, Queſnel and others, who have openly declad for putting the Scriptures in the Vulgar

Tongue into every Christian's *Hands, a*
thereby have incurr'd such terrible Censur
from Rome *as have given Birth to t*
Great Revolution in the Church of Franc
under the Direction of that Great Man t
Cardinal de Noailles.

LETTE

LETTER II.

Concerning the Worſhip of God, the Immortality of the Soul, and the Free-will of Man.

SIR,

THE Paper you have done me the honour to ſend me, cantains three Queries.

1*ſt*. Can the infinitely perect Being require any Worſhip from eings that are infinitely inferior to im?

2*dly*. Is it poſſible to Demonſtrate, hat Man's Soul is Immortal?

3*dly.* Is it consistent to believe, That the infinitely perfect Being has given Man a Free-Will, which concludes a Liberty of oversetting Order?

Chap. I.

The infinitely perfect Being doth require a Worship from all intelligent Creatures.

THE Truth of the Existence of the infinitely perfect Being, is so clear and so fruitful a Principle, that we need only consult it without Prejudice, and follow it *Sincerely*, to find therein all we want to know of that necessary Being. And here, in my Opinion, you see the Truths to be drawn from it.

I.

We cannot reasonbly Doubt, that so perfect a Being doth love himself: For being Just, he owes an infinite Love to his infinite Perfection. Hence I infer, That if this Being should produce any

Work

Work beſides himſelf, without produ-
eing it for his own Sake, that therein
he ſhould act more imperfectly than the
imperfect Beings, who act for the Love
of him. There are Men, thoſe imper-
fect Beings! who in all their Works pro-
poſe to themſelves no other End, than
to pleaſe that perfect Being. If there-
fore the perfect Being did unjuſtly refuſe
to himſelf the end of his Actions to his
own Advantage, which the imperfect
Beings aim at in their Actions, he would
act leſs perfectly than Pious Men; Which
is utterly impoſſible. We ought there-
fore to conclude with the Bible, *That
God has made all Things for his own Sake.*
On the one Hand he is infinitely Per-
fect in himſelf: On the other Hand in-
finitely Juſt, becauſe Juſtice is part of
the infinite Perfection. He owes there-
fore to himſelf all what he doth, and it
is not lawful for him to give away any
of his Rights, Such is his Greatneſs,
that he can act for no other than him-
ſelf. He calls himſelf *The Jealous God.*
Jealouſy which is unbecoming and ridi-
culous in Man, is ſupreme Juſtice in
God. He ſaith as he ought, *I will not
give my Glory to Another.* He owes him-
ſelf, and pays all to himſelf. All pro-

ceeds from him all ought to return unto him; otherwiſe Order wou'd be deſtroy'd. The Author of the Paper ſent me, acknowledges, that the all-perfect Being has drawn Men from nothing, he ought likewiſe to own that that Being has created them for himſelf. If he acted without any End, he would act in a blind and ſenſeleſs Manner wherein his Wiſdom could have no ſhare. If he acted for an End, leſs exalted than himſelf, he would debaſe his Action below that of every virtuous Man who acts all for the ſupream Being. It would be abſurdity itſelf. Let us therefore conclude without fear of Miſtaking, *that God has made every Thing for his own Sake.*

II.

That Supream Being, which we call God, cannot have created the intelligent Beings for his own Sake, without willing at the ſame time that thoſe Beings ſhould employ their Underſtanding to know and to admire him; and their Will to love and obey him. The Order or Juſtice of Things requires that our Intelligence be regulated, and our Love be juſt; it is Neceſſary therefore

hat God, who is the Supream Order nd Juſtice, ſhould will that we love is infinite Perfection more than our own ounded Perfection; and that we ſhould ove his infinite Goodneſs above the fi- ite Goodneſs which he has endow'd us with. This is the true and rational Love of Juſtice; we are only limited; artaking and depending Good Beings, whereas the firſt Being is the only Good- neſs, the Spring of all others, unlimited nd independant. Our Love for that Goodneſs ought likewiſe in us to be a Love the only Spring of all other Love, a Love without Bounds, and a Love independent from all other Love. On the contrary, the Love of our ſelves ught to be a Love void of that Primitive Love; only a ſmall Rivulet deriv'd from hat great River, a Love ſubſtitute to it, limited Love and proportion'd to the mall Parcel of Goodneſs which is fall'n o our Share. God is the All, and we re the Nothing, that have borrow'd a mall Parcel of that Being to cover ur ſelves with. We do not belong to ur ſelves, but to him that has made s, and who has given us All, even that hich we call Myſelf; that Self, which s ſo dear, to us, and commonly our only

God,

God, is properly ſpeaking but a ſmall Part, that would be the Whole. It brings all Things to itſelf, and therein doth imitate God, and ſets itſelf up for an Idol: That Idol muſt be deſtroy'd. We muſt bring that Self Lower, and put it in its right Place again, which is but a ſmall Corner of the Univerſe in proportion to the little Perfection and Being it poſſeſſes.

He will come into his Rank again to be eſteem'd and beloved according to his true Merit. And this is the Love of Juſtice, this is Order. This is what God owes to himſelf: this is what it is juſt he ſhould require of his Creatures capable of knowing and loving. It is needful that in Creating it, he ſhould propoſe, as the End of his Work to make himſelf known as infinite Truth, and to make himſelf belov'd as univerſal Goodneſs; ſo that may be known in him all Community of his Truth, and belov'd in him all Community of Goodneſs without Bounds. As ſoon as that Foundation is laid, the whole Building will riſe as of it ſelf. As ſoon as you ſhall ſuppoſe, that God alone ought immediately to have all our Love, and that afterwards this Love doth ſpread upon

that

hat Self, only in the ſame manner as o-
her limited Goods in proportion to its
imits, then will Religion be wholly
nfolded in our Hearts. You may even
eave Man to his own Heart, if it ap-
ears that he loves himſelf only with that
ove of God, aud that Self-love is laid
ſide.

III.

This being agreed on, there remains
o farther Queſtion about the Worſhip
f God. There is no other Worſhip be-
des Love, ſays St. *Auſtin*, *Nec colitur
iſi amando.* It is the Kingdom of God
ithin our ſelves, it is the Worſhipping in
pirit and in Truth; it is the only End
r which God has made us. He has
iven us Love for no other End than
hat we ſhould Love him. We muſt
e-eſtabliſh Order by overthrowing that
Diſorder which has prevail'd. We muſt
ut God, which is the All, in the room
hich Self did occupy, as if it had
een the All, the Centre and univerſal
pring. That Self muſt be tied down in
s ſmall Corner, as a weak and ſmall
arcel of the borrow'd Goodneſs. At
he ſame time we muſt reſtore to God
he Place of the All, and be aſham'd to
ave uſed him ſo long like a private Be-
ng, with whom we wou'd make Terms

as

as between Equals, to unite or not unite our ſelves with him, to make one's own Bargain, or elſe to look out for ſome other Ally.

In a Word, we muſt place God in the room of that Self, which it occupy'd without Shame, and put Self in that ſmall Place where we had reduced God to, after having made him little in Compariſon to that Self. Bring it about that Men think thus, and all Doubts are vaniſh'd, all the Rebellions of Men's Heart are ſubdued, and all Pretences of Impiety and Irreligion are defeated. I do not enter into Reaſonings, I ask nothing of Man; I give him up to his Love, let him love with all his Heart what is lovely without Bounds, and let him do what he pleaſes; and I am ſure, that what will pleaſe him, cannot be anything but the moſt pure Religon. This is the perfect Worſhip, *Nec Colitur niſi amando.* He will do nothing but Love and Obey. *The Nation of the Juſt*, ſaith the Scripture, *is nothing but Obedience and Love.*

IV.

It will be objected, That this Love is an inward Worſhip. But where muſt we

e look for the External One? Why ſhall e ſuppoſe that God doth require it? ut is it not obvious that the external Vorſhip is a neceſſary Conſequence of he internal Worſhip, Love. Shew me Society of Men who look on each o-her, as being altogether but one and he ſame Family, the Father of which in Heaven. Shew me Men, who live nly by Love of that heavenly Father, nd love neither their Neighbour nor hemſelves, but for love of him, and who e but one Heart and one Soul; don't you hink that in this Godly Society, the Mouth will inceſſantly ſpeak from the illneſs of the Heart? They will admire he All-high, they will love the All-good; hey will ſing his Praiſes, they will bleſs im for all his Bounties, they will not ſtop here, they will make him known to all the Nations of the Univerſe; they will endea-our to help up their Brethren, as ſoon s they ſhall find them tempted by Pride, r any carnal Paſſion, to abandon the Well-beloved. They will ſigh to find the eaſt cooling or abatement of Love. They will croſs the Seas to the remoteſt Parts of the World, to make the common Father known and beloved to the forlorn People that have forgot his Greatneſs.

What

What is it you call an external Worſhip if this is not one? Then would God be all *things in all*, he would be the King, Father and univerſal Friend; he would be the living Law of the Hearts. All the Diſcourſe would be concerning him and for him; he would be conſulted, believ'd and obey'd. Alas! If a mortal King, or a Father of a mean Family, through his Wiſdom acquires the eſteem and confidence of all his Children, one ſees nothing elſe beſides Honours that are paid him; there is no Occaſion to ask where is his Worſhip, or whether any is due to him; all what is done to honour him, to obey him, and acknowledge his Favours, is a continual Worſhip in every Body's View. What would it be then if Men were poſſeſs'd with the Love of God? Their Society would be a ſolemn Worſhip like that which is deſcribed to us of the Bleſſed in Heaven.

V.

It may be replied, that it is needful to prove, that beſides Love and Virtues neceſſarily adhering to it, Man owes to God publick and regulated Ceremonies; but thoſe Ceremonies are not the Eſſential Part of Religion, which conſiſts in Love and

nd the Practiſe of Virtue. Thoſe Cere-
nonies are inſtituted not as being the
ſſential Part of Religion, but only to
rve as Signs which ſhow it and nouriſh it
n it ſelf, and help to communicate it to
thers. Thoſe Ceremonies are in Reſpect
o God what the Tokens of Reſpect are
o a Father, whom his Children ſalute,
mbrace, and ſerve with Earneſtneſs;
r to a King who is harangu'd, plac'd
n a Throne, ſurrounded with a certain
Grandeur, and to ſtrike the Imagination
f the People ſtill more, before whom
e great Ones kneel. Is it not true,
hat Men commonly tied and attach'd to
iſible Objects, and whoſe Reaſon is
eak, have yet greater need of a Shew
o imprint in 'em a ſuitable Reſpect for
n inviſible Majeſty, and contrary to all
heir Paſſions, than to produce that
ffect for a viſible one, who ſtartles their
yes and flatters their ſenſual Paſſions.
One feels the neceſſity there is of a Court
r a King, and yet is unwilling to own
he much greater Occaſion of a Pomp for
Divine Service. This may be ſtiled, not
nowing the Occaſions of Mankind, and
o ſtick at Circumſtances, when the prin-
ipal Point is yielded.

VI.

VI.

And do we not ſee, that all Nation who have ador'd any Divinity, have fix' their Worſhip to ſome external Demon ſtrations, called Ceremonies? As ſoon the internal Worſhip is admitted, the e ternal is requiſite to expreſs it, and com municate it to Society. Human Kin did offer Sacrifices and Gifts till th Times of *Moſes*. *Moſes* did inſtitut Ceremonies in the Religion of the Jew The Chriſtian Church has received ſom from Jeſus Chriſt. No Matter whethe Beaſts are killed, Incenſe burnt, or th Fruits of the Earth be offer'd, provide Men have Signs by which they expre their Love of God. All the Products the Earth are his own Gifts to us; to of fer, is only returning what we hav received; making an Acknowledgemen that we had it all from him. By tho Signs we call to Mind God's Majeſty an his Bounty; we excite each other t Prayers and Praiſes of him and to pu our Hopes in him; we endeavour at certain Uniformity of Signs, to ſhow th Union of our Hearts and to prevent Di orders in the common Worſhip. Whe God has not regulated thoſe Ceremonie

n his written Laws, Men have followed Tradition, going back to the very Beginning of the World: When God has regulated thoſe Ceremonies by written Laws, Men have been bound to obſerve them nviolably. Even the Proteſtants who ave found ſo much Fault with our Ceremonies have been obliged to retain many f them: So conſtant a Truth it is, that Men ave Occaſion for ſome. There is Need Ceremonies, not ſuch as amuſe or impoſe upon us, but ſuch as are a Help to ecollect our ſelves and call to our Minds he Memory of God's Favours. This is he true Worſhip of God. Whoever has nother Idea of it is miſtaken, and enterains wrong Notions of it.

VII.

Let any one now compare theſe two chemes. In the one each Man acknowdging the true God, would honour him wardly after his own Manner, without iving any Sign or Mark thereof to the ſt of Mankind. In the other, Men have common Worſhip, by who ſe Help eryone recollects himſelf, feeds his Love, difies his Brethren, makes God known ſuch of Mankind who had no Knowdge of him, or have loſt it. Oh! How

lovely

lovely and moving is that Spectacle. I it not plain, that the ſecond Scheme i a thouſand Times more worthy of th perfect Being, and more adapted to th Occaſions of Mankind than the firſt Whoever ſhall have taken a true Reſolu tion to prefer God to himſelf, and t carry the Yoke of the Lord, will neve heſitate between theſe two.

VIII.

'Tis objected that God is infinitely a bove Man, that there is not the leaſt Pro portion between them, that God has n Occaſion for our Worſhip; laſtly, tha this Worſhip of a limited Will is unwor thy of a Being infinite in his Perfections It is true, that God has no Manner o Occaſion for our Worſhip, without which he is Happy, Perfect, and All-ſufficien to himſelf: But, if he Wills and Com mands that Worſhip? which, though im perfect, is not unworthy of him? and i can only be for that very Worſhip that h has created us. When the Queſtion is t know, what doth or doth not becom the infinite Being, we ought not to pre tend to penetrate into it with our ſhor ſighted and weak Reaſon. The finit Beings cannot comprehend the infinite

It

t is from the Infinite himſelf we ought to
earn what he may Will or not Will. Now
ve have plain Fact to determine this.
On the one Hand, we cannot doubt that
he infinite Being has created us; on the
ther we ſee plainly, that in creating us
e could not have a more noble and exalt-
d End than that of being known and be-
oved by us. It is in vain to alledge that
his Knowledge and limited Love are an
nd not at all proportion'd to the infinite
erfection of God. However imperfect
hat End may be, yet it is the moſt per-
& that God could propoſe to himſelf
y creating us. To make the Thing eaſie
nd remove all Difficulties, we muſt di-
inguiſh between what the Creature can
o, and the Complacency of God therein.
The Action of the Creature which knows
nd loves God, is always neceſſarily im-
erfect like the Creature it ſelf that doth
. It is always infinitely below God. But
hat Action of knowing and loving God,
the nobleſt and the moſt perfect Opera-
on which God can draw from his Crea-
ure, and which he can propoſe to him-
lf as the End of his Work. If God could
ot produce out of nothing any Creature,
ut upon Condition to draw therefrom
me Work as perfect as God himſelf, he

then

then could never pretend to produce any Creature out of nothing; for there can never be any that ſhall be or become capable of performing any Action equally perfect with God himſelf.

The Fact however is beyond all doubt, that God has created all Things out of nothing; his Perfection in his Productions requires he ſhould have propoſed to himſelf to draw out of his Creatures the moſt noble and perfect Operation, which their narrow and bounded Nature was capable of. Now this moſt perfect Operation of Human Kind, is the Knowledge and Love of God: What God produces from Man can be but imperfect, as Man himſelf is: Yet God draws from him the moſt perfect Work which he is any Ways able to afford: And it is ſufficient for the maintaining of Order, that God ſhould draw from his Creature the beſt he can, within the Limits he has fix'd the ſame. Then he is pleaſed and ſatisfied with his Production. His Power has effected what his Wiſdom requires. He takes Delight in his Creature, and that very Delight is the End which he propoſeth to himſelf. Now this Complacency or Delight is not diſtinguiſhed from himſelf; ſo that properly ſpeaking, he is himſelf his own End.

The

The accompliſh'd Action of his own Creature is but the Subject of his Complacency; it is Wiſdom in which he pleaſeth himſelf; and this Complacency is equally with him, infinitely perfect, ſince it is equally Juſt and Wiſe.

IX.

We cannot doubt but that Mankind knows God, and that many among them do love him, or at leaſt have a Deſire to love him. It is therefore as clear as the Sun, that it was God's Will to make himſelf known and beloved; for if God had been unwilling to communicate to us the Knowledge and Love of him, we could never have either known or loved him. I may therefore ask, wherefore has God given us the Capacity of knowing and loving him? Certainly it is the moſt precious of all his Gifts. Has he granted it to us in a blind Manner, without Reaſon, by meer Chance, without deſigning we ſhould make any uſe of it? He has given us corporeal Eyes to ſee the Light of the Sun; ſhall we believe that he has given us the Eyes of the Mind, which are capable of diſcerning his eternal Truth, without willing that the ſame ſhould be known to us? I own, we can neither

neither know nor love infinitely the infinite Perfection. Our higheſt Knowledge will always remain infinitely imperfect in Proportion to the infinitely perfect Being. In a word, though we do know God, it can never be but with a limited Knowledge; but we know him thus far, that we are ſure in pronouncing *What he is not*, that we aſcribe to him ſuch Perfections, as are ſuitable to his Dignity, without being in danger of miſtaking. There is no other Being in Nature, which we confound with God, and we know how to deſcribe him with his Character of *Infinite* which is only one, and not communicable. It ſeems we know him pretty diſtinctly, ſince the clear Idea we have of him doth force us to prefer him to ourſelves. Such an Idea, which goes ſo far as to dethrone *Self*, muſt work very powerfully on Man blindly fond of himſelf to Adoration. Never was Idea ſo hardly ſtruggled with, and yet came off with ſuch Vigor. Let us judge of its Strength by what it forces us to own againſt our ſelves. Nothing is ſo ſurpriſing as the Idea of God, which I carry at the bottom of my Heart within my ſelf; it is an Infinite, contain'd in a

finite

finite Being. What I have within my ſelf doth exceed me without Meaſure. I do not comprehend, how I can contain him within my Mind, and yet I do. It is needleſs to examine how I can keep him within that narrow Compaſs, ſince the Fact is plain, and not to be denied. This incomprehenſible Idea of the Divine Being, not to be blotted out, is that which makes me his Reſemblance notwithſtanding my Imperfection and Lowneſs. As he doth know and love himſelf infinitely, I do know and love him according to my Meaſure. I cannot know the Infinite but with a finite Knowledge, and I can only love him with a finite Love, as my ſelf; yet I know him as being Infinite, and I will and Endeavour to love him with the greateſt Love he has made me capable of. I wiſh it was in my Power to put no Bounds to my Love for a Perfection which has no Bounds. Once more, It is true, that neither this Knowledge nor this Love have not a Perfection equal to their Object; but that Man who knows and loves God according to his Meaſure of Knowledge and Love, is incomparably more worthy of that perfect Being, than that Man who would be as without a God in this World, never ſolicitous either to know or to love

him. Herein you ſee two different Plan of God's Work; the one is as worthy o his Wiſdom and of his Goodneſs as we can conceive it, the other is unworthy of both, and has no Manner of rationa End. It is eaſie to conclude which o theſe two Plans God has followed.

X.

When a Man humbleth himſelf, he on ly ſeeks to be independent, it is a deceit ful and hypocritical Humility. Whil he is magnifying to himſelf his Lowlineſ his Nothingneſs, and the infinite Diſpro portion which is betwixt God and him ſelf, it is with no other View than t ſhake off God's Yoke and to ſet himſel up for a Sort of a little Divinity of his ow liking, by ſatisfying all his inordinat Paſſions, and making himſelf the Cente of every Thing about him. Man is gla to place God in an infinite Height and Di ſtance above him, whence he doth not deig either to obſerve us, make us Inſtrument of his Glory, intereſt himſelf in us, or con cern himſelf about us, to correct us, per fect us, reward us or puniſh us. Bu is it not apparent that the infinite Di ſtance between God and us doth no hinder him from being always abou

nd within us; and that it is even that erfection in which he exceeds us infi-itely, which enables him to do and o-erate every Thing in us, and to be earer to us than we are our ſelves? How s it poſſible that he, who makes our Eyes o ſee, our Ears to hear, our Underſtand-ngs to know, and our Will to love, ſhould ot be intent upon every Thing, which he perates within us? How can it be he hould not intereſt himſelf in what he akes Care every Moment to produce in s? That Attention coſts nothing to an nfinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs. In that, very Thing is Action, every Thing is Reſt. We would fain conceive a God o far diſtant from us; ſo haughty, and o indifferent in his Haughtineſs, as to liſdain to watch over Mankind; ſo that very one of us, without being under a-y Conſtraint from his Looks, might live without Rule, following the Dictates of his Paſſions and Pride. By pretending thus to raiſe God, we degrade him; for we make of him a God indifferent as to Good or Evil, the Virtues or Vices of his Creatures, the Diſorder or Order of the World, which he has framed. By ſeeming to humble our ſelves, we make our ſelves Gods, we overthrow all Sub-

ordination, we give our ſelves the looſe promiſe our ſelves Impunity, and we attempt to place our ſelves even above our Reaſon.

Once more, compare theſe two Plans the one offering us a God, wiſe, good watchful, who ranks, directs, rewards who will be known, beloved and obey'd the other preſents us a God not all concerning himſelf with our Behaviour affected with neither Virtue nor Vice nor with Reaſon violated, or conformed to by his Creatures; who gives Man up to his mad Pride and all his brutal Deſires; who neglects him after he has made him, and doth not care to be either known or beloved by him, though he hath given him all the ſufficient Faculties to do both. Compare theſe two Plans and I defie you not to prefer the firſt to the ſecond.

CHAP

CHAP. II.

The SOUL *of* MAN *is Immortal.*

THIS Queſtion will eaſily be put in a clear Light, if it be but reduced to its true Terms, and ſeparated from what is of a farther Extent.

I.

It is true that the Soul of Man is not a Being depending on it ſelf, or having a neceſſary Exiſtence. There is but one Being which has an Exiſtence of it ſelf, can never loſe that ſame, but doth communicate it to all others according to its own Pleaſure. God would have no need of acting any Thing to annihilate the Soul of Man. He need only ceaſe for a Moment, or ſuſpend the Action by which he continues its Creation at every Moment, to plunge the ſame again into the Abyſs of Non-exiſtence and Nothingneſs, where he drew it; juſt as a Man needs only to let fall his Hand to

drop a Stone which he held up in the Air that inſtantly falls by its own Weight. So that the rational Query is not here to know, whether the Soul of Man can be annihilated in caſe it ſhould ſo pleaſe God; for it is apparent that it may ſo be, and that it entirely depends on the Will of God.

N. B. *Our Author is here of the ſame Opinion with the Famous Mr.* Locke *and* Le Clerc, *who have to a Demonſtration ſhewn, notwithſtanding what fearful Bigots or deſigning Men may ſay, That the Immortality of the Soul does not depend on its Immateriality, but on the ſole Pleaſure of God.*

II.

The Queſtion is to know, Whether the Soul has in its ſelf natural Cauſes of Corruption or Deſtruction, which put a Period to its Exiſtence after a certain Time; and whether it can be philoſophically demonſtrated, that the Soul has in it ſelf no ſuch Cauſes. See here the negative Proof of it. As ſoon as you have eſtabliſh'd the moſt real and ſolid Difference between the Body and Soul, you are vaſtly ſurprized at their Union

nd it is only by the *Medium* of God's Might you can conceive, how he could nite and cauſe a Harmony in the Actions of two ſo different Natures. Bodies o not think; Souls are neither diviſible, xtended, figurated, nor endow'd with odily Faculties. Ask any ſenſible Perſon, whether his preſent Thought be round or quare, white or yellow, hot or cold; iviſible in ſix or in twelve different Parts; nſtead of giving you a ſerious Anſwer he will laugh at you. Ask him if the Atoms of which his Body is made up, e wiſe or fooliſh, if they know each other, if they be virtuous, have a Friendhip for each other; if the round Atoms ave more Wit or Goodneſs than the quare ones; he will laugh again, beauſe he will not be able to believe that ou are ſerious in the Enquiry after thoſe nconſiſtencies. Go yet farther with him; Suppoſe Atoms of the Figure he ſhall ix upon, deſire him to make them as miute as ever he pleaſes, and ask him whether at laſt he has a Proſpect of that Point of Time, when thoſe Atoms which had no Knowledge at all before, ſhall all on a ſudden begin to know each other, to know all that is about them, and to ſay within themſelves, I do believe this,

but I do not believe that; I love ſuch an Object, but I hate the other. He will think that you ask him Childiſh Queſtions, he will laugh at them, as at the moſt extravagant Metamorphoſes or Fables. The ridiculouſneſs of the Queries ſhews perfectly well, that none of all the Properties of a Body enter into the Notions we have of a Spirit or a thinking Being; and on the contrary, none of the Properties of a Spirit enter into the Idea we have of a Body or an extended Being. The real Diſtinction, and the entire Diſlikeneſs of the Nature of thoſe two Beings being thus ſettled, no Man ought to be ſurprized that their Union (which conſiſts only in a ſort of Harmony or mutual Relation between the Thoughts of the one and the Motions of the other) ſhould have an End, without either of thoſe Beings being diſſolved or ceaſing to exiſt. There is more Reaſon to wonder how two Beings different in their Natures can continue together any Time, and act in Concert. Why ſhall any one therefore conclude, that one of thoſe Beings muſt be annihilated, aſſoon as they ceaſe to be united, ſince their Union was in all Appearance ſo unnatural. Let us fancy two Bodies abſolutely of the ſame Nature;

part

art them, you deſtroy neither; beſides the xiſtence of the one can never prove the xiſtence of the other, nor the Annihila-on of the one the Deſtruction of the o-her. Though they be ſuppoſed alike in ll Things, their real Difference ſuffices o demonſtrate, that they can never be he Cauſe of each other's Exiſtence or An-ihilation. Becauſe the one is not the o-her, it may exiſt or be annihilated with-ut the other Body. Their Difference eaſons their mutual Independance. If e muſt reaſon thus of two Bodies, which ave been parted and are entirely of the ame Nature, with how much more Rea-on ought we to argue thus of a Spirit nd a Body whoſe Union is no ways na-ural, their Natures being altogether ſo nlike in every Circumſtance. On the one and the Diſcontinuation of an Union ſo ccidental to both their Natures can be neither a Cauſe of Annihilation; on the ther Hand, the very Annihilation of one f thoſe two Beings would in no ways e the Reaſon or Cauſe why the other hould likewiſe be annihilated. A Being hich is no ways the Cauſe of the other's xiſtence, cannot be the Cauſe of its De-ruction. It is therefore as clear as the Day, that the Diſ-union of the Body and

Soul cannot cauſe the Annihilation of either the Soul or the Body; and that even the Annihilation of the Body doth not contribute any Thing towards putting a Period to the Being of the Soul.

III.

The Union of the Body and Soul conſiſting only in a Harmony or mutual Relation between the Thoughts of the one and the Motions of the other; it is eaſie to conceive what the Diſcontinuation of that Harmony muſt occaſion. The Harmony is not natural to thoſe two Beings ſo much unlike and ſo independent of each other. There could not even be a leſs Power than God himſelf, who by a Will altogether Arbitrary and Almighty could ſubject two Beings ſo widely different in their Natures and Operations to that Harmony for acting together. Suppoſe that Almighty and uncontroulable Will of God ſuſpended, that forc'd Harmony if I may call it ſo, is immediately ſuſpended likewiſe; as a Stone falls with its own Weight, ſoon as the Hand that kept it up in the Air is removed from it, each of theſe two Parts re-aſſumes its natural Independency towards the other. It muſt follow from thence, that

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the Soul, far from being annihilated by the breach of that Union, which only puts her again into her own natural State, is then free to think independently from all the Motions of Bodies; in the ſame Manner as I am free to walk alone as ſoon as I have been looſened from another Man to whom a ſuperior Force did keep me chain'd. The End of that Union is only a Diſengagement and a Liberty, as the Union was but a Bond and a mere Subjection; then ought the Soul to think independently from all the Motions of the Bodies, in the ſame Manner as the Chriſtian Religion ſuppoſes that the Angels, who were never united to Bodies, do think in Heaven. Why ſhould we therefore apprehend the annihilating of the Soul upon that Separation, which can produce nothing leſs than an entire Liberty of thinking.

IV.

The Body on the other Hand is not annihilated; the very minuteſt Atom doth not periſh. In what we call *Death*, nothing more happens than a ſimple diſplacing of Organs; the moſt ſubtile and refin'd Bodies do exhale; the Machine is diſſoly'd and its Harmony deſtroy'd.

But however the Parts of it be ſcattered up and down the World either by Accidents or by Corruption, none ever ceaſes to have and keep a Being; and all Philoſophers agree that not ſo much as the vileſt or moſt imperceptible Atom in the Univerſe is ever annihilated. To what Purpoſe then ſhould any one fear the Annihilation of that other moſt noble and thinking Subſtance, call'd *Soul?* How can any one imagine that the Body, which is never annihilated, ſhould deſtroy the Soul more noble than it ſelf, a Stranger to it and abſolutely independent from it? The Diſ-union of thoſe two Beings can no more operate the Annihilation of the one than of the other. It is readily granted, that no Atom of the Body doth periſh at the Time of the Separation of thoſe two Parts? What is the Reaſon then, that Men are ſo buſie in finding out Pretences for believing that the Soul which is infinitely more perfect, is deſtroy'd. It is true that at any Time God is Almighty and ſufficient to deſtroy it if he pleaſes; but there is no Reaſon to believe that he Wills it rather at the Time of its Separation from, than of its Union with the Body. What is call'd *Death* being only a diſordering of the Corpuſcules

which

which compoſe the Organs, it cannot be ſaid that this Diſorder happens as well in the Soul as in the Body. The Soul as it is a thinking Being, has none of the Bodily Properties; It has neither Parts, nor Figure, nor ſight of the Parts in Relation to each other, nor Motion or Change of Sight. So that no Kind of Diſorder can happen to it. The Soul, which is the *Thinking ſelf*, and the *Willing ſelf*, is a ſimple Being in it ſelf, and not diviſible. There is never in the ſame Man *Two ſelfs*, nor two Halfs of the *ſame ſelf*. The Objects are convey'd to the Soul by divers Organs which are the different Senſations; but all theſe different Channels terminate in one only Center where they all unite. It is the ſelf which is one in ſo ſtrict a Senſe, that it is through that only that each Man has a true Unity, and is not ſeveral Men. We cannot ſay of that ſelf which thinks and wills, that it has different Parts join'd together, as the Body compoſed of different Limbs join'd together. This Soul has neither Figure, Sight, local Motion, nor Colour, nor Heat, nor Hardneſs, nor other ſenſible Quality. We neither ſee, hear, nor feel the ſame; We only conceive that it thinks and wills, as it is the Nature of

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the Body to be extended, diviſible, and of a particular Figure. As ſoon as we admit the real Difference betwixt Body and Soul, we muſt, without the leaſt doubt, conclude, That the Soul is neither compounded nor divided, nor figur'd, nor fitted, becauſe of its Parts, and conſequently has no Diſpoſition of Organs. As for the Body, which is organiz'd, it may be disjointed, alter its Figure, and loſe its Harmony; but the Soul can never loſe that Order it had not, and which doth not ſuit its Nature.

V.

We might ſay, That as the Soul was created for no other End than to be united with the Body, it is ſo much limited to that Society, that its borrow'd Exiſtence ceaſes, as ſoon as its Society with the Body determines. But this is talking in the Air, and without any Proof, To ſuppoſe the Soul was created to exiſt no longer than exactly as ſoon as it ſhould continue united with the Body. Whence have any Authority to aſſert ſo uncouth a Thought? And, What Right have they to ſuppoſe this, without producing Proofs of it? The Body is certainly leſs perfect than the Soul; ſince it is a greater

Perfection

Perfection to think, than not to think: Yet we ſee that the Exiſtence of Bodies doth not determine with the Duration of its Society with the Soul: After Death has broke the Bonds of that Union, that Body ſtill exiſts, even in its minuteſt Particles. We ſee only two Things; the one, That the Body is divided and diſmembred: This cannot happen to the Soul, which is ſimple without Diſpoſition of Parts. The other, That the Body is no longer mov'd dependantly from the Thoughts of the Soul: Ought we not therefore to conclude, that in the ſame Manner, and with much more Reaſon, the Soul continues to exiſt on its Part, and that it then begins to think independantly from the Operations and Motions of the Body. The Operation follows the Exiſtence, as all Philoſophers agree. Thoſe two Natures are independant from each other, not only as to their Natures, but their Operations. *As the Body has no Occaſion for the Thoughts of the Soul, to be Mov'd; the Soul has no need of the Motions of the Body, to Think.* It was only by Chance, That thoſe two unlike Beings, and ſo independant from each other, were ſubjected to operate harmoniouſly. The End of their tranſitory Society let's them

them operate freely, each according to its proper Nature, which has no manner of Relation with the other.

VI.

In short, the Question is only to know, Whether God, who has it entirely in his Choice to annihilate the Soul of Man, or to continue its Existence to Eternity, has declar'd himself to will either its Annihilation or Preservation. There is not the least Likelihood, or any Reason, that can induce us to believe, That *He* would annihilate the Soul, who doth not annihilate the least Atom in the whole Universe. It is no ways likely that he would annihilate the Soul at the very Moment in which he separates it from the Body, since it is a Being wholly a Stranger to that Body, and independant of it. This Separation being no more than the End of its Subjection, and to its acting in concert with the Body; it is evident, That this Separation is the Deliverance of the Soul, and not its Annihilation. We must however own, That we should be forc'd to believe that Annihilation, though never so extraordinary, and so difficult to conceive, had God himself reveal'd it to us in his Word. That

which

which depends entirely on his Free-will nd Choice, cannot come to our Know-dge but from himſelf. Thoſe therefore ho will believe the Mortality of the oul, againſt all Probability, ought to ake it out to us, That God has ſo ex-reſly declar'd it, as to leave no room for oubt. It is no ways incumbent on us to rove, That God will not effect this An-hilation. It is enough for us to ſup-oſe, That the Soul of Man, which is e moſt perfect of the Beings we know ext to God, ought much leſs to loſe its xiſtence, than ſo many other lower Be-gs which ſurround us. Now the An-hilation of the leaſt Atom, in the whole niverſe, ſince the Creation, is yet un-recedented. Therefore it is ſufficient r us to ſuppoſe, That the Soul of Man , as well as the leaſt Atom, out of all anger of being annihilated. This, of l Prejudices and Suppoſitions is the moſt tional, the moſt certain, and moſt de-ſive. It ought to be the Task of our dverſaries, to rob us of this Advan-ge, by clear and deciſive Arguments. hey cannot poſſibly prove the contrary, t by a poſitive Declaration from God mſelf. When a Man, in all Probability ght to think in Favour of his moſt in-

timate

timate Friend, what he on all Occasions thinks in Favour of the least of Mankind, and of those who are the most indifferent to him; every body has a Right to conclude, That he actually doth think the same in Favour of that intimate Friend; unless he expressly declares the contrary. Besides, his Will being entirely free, cannot be known but to himself. When I can either go out of my Room, or stay in it; no body but my self can acquaint my Servants with the free Resolution I have taken thereupon, chusing either the one or the other. It is evident therefore, that our Adversaries ought to prove it to us, by some express Declaration of God himself, That he has in a particular Manner excepted the Soul of Man out of his general Law, not to annihilate any Being, and to preserve the Existence of the least Atom. Let them therefore either be silent hereafter, or produce such a Declaration of God for making that Exception to his general Law.

VII.

We produce the Bible which carries all the Tokens of its Author, God, since it is that which has taught us to know and to the utmost of our Power to love

the true God. It is in that Book that God ſpeaks ſo much like a God, when he ſays, *I am, That I am.* No other Book has drawn God in a Manner worthy of him. The Gods of *Homer* are a ridicule, and a Shame to Divinity. The Book which we are ſpeaking of, after having ſhown God as he really is, teaches us the only Worſhip that is worthy of him. It is not requir'd of us to appeaſe him with Victims; but to love him more than our ſelves; to love our ſelves, but for his Sake, and with his pure Love. We muſt forſake our ſelves for his Sake, and prefer his Will to our own. The Love of him muſt work in us all Virtues, and ſhut out all Vices. It is that entire Change of Man's Heart, which Man could never have imagin'd of himſelf. He never would have invented a Religion which robs him even of his own Underſtanding, and Will, and makes him entirely dependant on another. And whenever that Religion is propos'd to him, with the moſt abſolute Authority, his Mind cannot conceive it, his Will rebels, and all his Faculties are exaſperated. There is no occaſion to wonder at it; ſince it requires no leſs than unhinging the whole Man, degrading that dear *Self*, breaking

that Idol, forming a new Man, and to place God in the room of that *Self*, to make it the Spring and Center of all our Affections and Love. As often as Man shall go about to frame a Religion, you may be sure that he will make it very different. Self-Love will dictate it. He will make it in all respects suit his own Purposes; whereas this other leaves him nothing; yet is this so just, That the very Things which make us the most averse to it, ought most of all to convince us of its Truth. God is *All*, to whom all is due. The Creature is nothing, to whom nothing ought to be left; but what is referr'd to God, and for the Sake of God. All Religion which reaches not so far, is unworthy God doth not new mould Man, and carries apparent Marks of Falsity. There is on Earth but one original Book, which makes Religion consist in loving God more than one's self, and to forsake one's self for God's Sake. All others, that repeat this great Truth, have borrow'd it out of this. All Truth is taught us in this fundamental Truth. The Book which has thus made known to the World, the Whole of God, the Nothingness of Man, together with the Worship of Love;

Love; can have no other Author but God. Either there is no Religion at all, or this is the only true One. Moreover, this Book is ſo God-like in its Doctrine, full of Prophecies, the fulfilling of which are apparent to the Eyes of all the World, particularly thoſe concerning the abandoning of the *Jews* to the Hardneſs of their Hearts, and the Calling in of the *Gentiles* to the Worſhip of the true God, through the *Meſſias*. Beſides, this Book is authoriz'd by innumerable Miracles done in the Face of the Sun, in different Ages, and in the Preſence of the greateſt Enemies of the Chriſtian Religion. In ſhort, this Book has perform'd all that is foretold in it. It has chang'd the very Face of the Earth, peopled Deſarts with *Anachorets*, who have prov'd Angels in mortal Bodies. It has made the moſt arduous, and yet moſt lovely Virtues to flouriſh, in the midſt of the moſt corrupt and impious Set of Men, * and has work'd upon Man idolizing himſelf, to reckon himſelf henceforth nothing, and only to love an inviſible Being. Such a Book ought to be read, as if it deſcended from

* *Our Author here, means the* COURT.

Hea-

Heaven upon Earth. It is this Book wherein God declares a Truth, which is ſo probable of it ſelf. The ſame God, All-good, and Almighty, who alone could deprive us of eternal Life, promiſes it to us. It is from the Expectation of that everlaſting Life, that he taught ſo many Martyrs to deſpiſe the ſhort, frail, and miſerable Life of their Bodies.

VIII.

Is it not natural to conceive, that God, who tries every Man in this ſhort Life, as to Virtue and Vice, and often lets the Wicked end their Courſe in Proſperity, whilſt the Virtuous live and die in Pain and Contempt; ſhould delay to another Life, the Reward of the Latter, and the Puniſhment of the Firſt? This we are aſſur'd of in this Divine Book. O wonderful and comfortable Conformity between the Oracles of Holy Scripture, and the Truth which we carry grafted within our ſelves! Every Thing agrees. Philoſophy, the ſupream Authority of the Promiſes, and the inward Sentiment of Truth in our own Hearts. Whence comes it then, that Men are ſo backward, and ſo incredulous about the happy News of their being Immortal?

The

The Atheiſt tells them, they are without Hopes, and that in a few Days they are going to be ſwallow'd up in the Abyſs of Nothingneſs for ever. They rejoyce at it. They triumph upon their approaching Extinction. Thoſe very People who love themſelves ſo paſſionately, are raviſh'd at this Doctrine ſo full of Horror. They have a Reliſh for Deſpair. Others tell them, that they have in reſerve an everlaſting Life to come; but they are angry with that Expectation, they are ſour'd at it; and dread to be convinc'd of it. They uſe all their Subtlety, to evade its moſt deciſive Proofs. They chuſe rather to periſh in delivering themſelves up to their mad Pride, and brutal Appetites, than to live eternally at the Expence of the leaſt Conſtraint to embrace a virtuous Courſe of Life. O monſtrous Frenzy! O extravagant Self-love! which turns againſt its own Intereſt; O Man! Become his own Enemy, by loving himſelf immoderately.

Chap. III.

Of the Free-will *of* Man.

THIS Queſtion will ſoon be decided if we go about it with the ſame Moderation and Sedateneſs, as we examine all the moſt Important Queries which are of uſe in Humane Life.

I.

We do not enquire, Whether God cou'd not have created Man, without giving him a Free-will, and compelling him always to will what is good, as we ſuppoſe in the Chriſtian Religion, that the bleſſed in Heaven are always neceſſitated to love God? Who is there can doubt but that God was abſolutely Maſter to Create Men at firſt in that State, and to fix them therein for ever.

II.

II.

I own, it is not demonſtrable from the Nature of our Souls, nor from the Rules of ſupream Order, that God has not put all Mankind in that State of a happy and holy Neceſſity. We muſt agree, That nothing but the arbitrary Will in God has reſolv'd to make Man a free Agent; that is, exempt from all ſort of Compulſion or Neceſſity, without determining to fix him in ſo happy a Neceſſity as always to Will what is Good.

III.

What decides the Queſtion, is the inward Conviction of our free Will, which we conſtantly are conſcious of. Our Reaſon conſiſts only in the clearneſs of our Ideas. We cannot help conſulting them attentively before we conclude that propoſition is true or falſe. It doth not depend from our Will to believe, that an Affirmative is a Negative; that a Circle is a Triangle; that a Vale is a Mountain, or that Night is Day. Whence comes it that it is utterly impoſſible for us to confound thoſe Things? It is becauſe the Exerciſe of Reaſon ends in conſulting our Ideas, and that the

Idea of a Circle is intirely differe
from that of a Triangle, that the No
tion of a Vale ſhuts out that of a Mou
tain, and that of the Day is oppoſite t
that of the Night. Reaſon as much as yo
pleaſe, I defy you to form any ſerio
Doubt about any of your clear Idea
You never judge of any of them, but 't
by and from them you judge, and th
are the unalterable Rule of all your Jud
ments. You miſtake ſometimes for
other Reaſon but that you do not co
ſult them with a ſufficient Exactneſs;
you affirm'd nothing but what they off
you, or denied nothing but what th
clearly exclude, you wou'd never fall in
the leaſt Error. You wou'd ſuſpend yo
Judgment as ſoon as the Idea you ex
min'd ſhould not appear ſufficiently cle
to you, and you wou'd never ſurrender b
to an invincible and irreſiſtable Ligh
Once more the whole Exerciſe of Re
ſon is confin'd to this Conſultation
Ideas. Thoſe who ſpeculatively rej
this Rule do not underſtand themſelv
and follow conſtantly in Practice throug
an unavoidable Neceſſity what in Spec
lation they refuſe to ſubmit to. T
fundamental Principle of all Reaſoni
being laid, I maintain that our Free-w

one of thoſe Truths of which every
an in his right Senſes has ſo clear an
ea, that its Evidence is invincible.
ne may with the outward Lips and in
Paſſion Diſpute and hold an Argument
ainſt this Truth in the Schools, as the
rrhoniſts have ridiculouſly Diſputed
out the Truth of their own Exiſtence,
at they might have the Reputation of
ubting of every individual Thing;
hey are a Sect of Lyars and not of *Phi-*
ſophers. They brag of their doubting,
ough to doubt be no ways in their
wer. Every Man in his Senſes, who
nſults himſelf, and gives heed to him-
f, carries within himſelf an invincible
ciſion, declaring him to be a free
gent. This Idea doth ſhew us, that
Man incurrs Guilt in no other Caſe,
t when he doth what he might have
oſen not to do; that is, what he doth
the choice of his Will, without be-
determin'd thereunto inevitably and
incibly by ſome other Cauſe, diſtinct
m his own Will. This is a Truth,
th St. *Auſtin*, for the explaining of
ich, there is no occaſion to ſearch
ply for Arguments in the Writings of
iloſophers. It is what Nature calls out,
is what is deeply imprinted in our

Hearts by bountiful Nature; it is clearer than the very Day; it is what all Men know, from the Schools where Children are taught to read, to the very Throne of *Solomon*; it is what Shepherds ſing upon the Hills, what Biſhops teach in the holy Places, and what all Mankind proclaim all over the World.

Doubts concerning Liberty can be neither more ſincere nor ſerious than thoſe concerning the Exiſtence of the Bodies that ſurround us. In a Diſputation the Imagination grows warm, one impoſes on one's ſelf, one fancies himſelf in a Doubt, and thereby confounds in vain Sophiſms the moſt palpable Truths: But in Practice, Men ſuppoſe Liberty, as they take it for granted that they have Arms, Legs, a Body, and that they are environ'd with other Bodies, againſt which they ought not to run their own with any Violence. Reaſon as much as you pleaſe upon your clear Ideas, you muſt either follow them without Fear of being deceiv'd, or become an abſolute Sceptick. Univerſal Doubting is not to be defended, although our cleareſt Ideas ſhould be proved to lead us now and then into Errors. It is uſeleſs to deliberate whether we ſhall or ſhall not follow them.

them. Their Evidence is irreſiſtible; it carries our Judgment forcibly along with it; and if they miſlead us, it is becauſe we are under an invincible Neceſſity of being miſled. In that Caſe we do not deceive our ſelves, it is a Power ſuperior to ours that deceives us, and delivers us up to Error and Deluſion. What can we do then but follow our Reaſon? And if even that deceives us, what is it will undeceive us? Have we within ourſelves another Reaſon ſuperior to that our very Reaſon, by whoſe Aſſiſtance we may miſtruſt her, and ſet her right again? That Reaſon can be nothing elſe but our Ideas, which we ask Counſel of, and compare together. Can we, by the Help of our Ideas only, bring in Queſtion our very Ideas? Are we poſſeſs'd of a ſecond Reaſon to amend that firſt in us? No, for certain. We may indeed forbear inferring, when thoſe Ideas are dark, and when their Darkneſs leaves us in Suſpenſe. But when they are as clear as this Propoſition, *Two and two make four*, Doubting could not be call'd an Uſe of our Reaſon, but a Phrenzy. If it be deceitful to follow the Dictates of a Reaſon, which by its Evidence draws us invincibly, it is the infinitely perfect

Being who deceives us, and is to be bla
med for it. We do our Duty when w
thus ſuffer us to be miſ-led, and w
ſhould become guilty if we did reſiſt tha
Self-Evidence, which at laſt would co
quer us, maugre all our vain Reſiſtance
and maintain with St. *Auſtin*, That th
Truth of the Liberty of the Will, an
its daily Practice, is ſo inwardly and in
vincibly evident, that no Man awak
can doubt of it in his Practice.

V.

Let us proceed to ſome familiar In
ſtances that will make this Truth plai
to the Senſes. Show me a Man wh
ſets up for a profound Philoſopher an
denies Free-Will, I ſhall not give my ſel
the Trouble to argue with him, but I'l
try him in the moſt common Occurren
ces of Life to make him confound him
ſelf. I ſuppoſe that this Man's Wife i
unfaithful to his Bed; That his Son di
obeys and ſlights him; His Friend be
trays him; His Servant robs him: If he
makes any Complaints of theſe, I'll an
ſwer him; Don't you know that none o
all theſe are to blame, and that they were
not free to act otherwiſe? They are, in
your own Opinion, as irreſiſtibly neceſ
ſitated

ſtated to will what they do will, as a Stone is forced to fall when it is no longer held up. Do you imagine that our Philoſopher will take this for a good Excuſe, and will be pacify'd by it? Can you believe that he will ceaſe to blame the Breach of Faith of his Wife, the Inſolence and Ingratitude of his Son, the Treachery of his Friend, and Theft of his Servant? Is it not certain that this inconſiſtent Philoſopher, who dares deny the Liberty of the Will to his Scholars from the Desk, will ſuppoſe it as indubitable when at Home, and that he will be no leſs reconciled to thoſe People, than if all his Life long he had publickly maintain'd the Doctrine of the greateſt Liberty of the Will. It is viſible therefore, That this is no true Philoſophy, ſince it gives it ſelf the Lye without any Shame. Go on a little farther; Tell this Man that the World blames him for that Action, of which the Guilt is laid at his Door. To juſtify himſelf, he will anſwer you, That he was not able to avoid it; and he will not queſtion, but that he ſhall be clear'd to all the World, if he but proves that he acted not by a free Choice, but by unavoidable Neceſſity and Force. You ſee then that this pretended Antago-

niſt of Free-Will is reduced to ſuppoſe it in Practice, even when he wou'd be thought not to believe it.

V.

It is true, That there are certain Actions, which we are not free to do, and which we neceſſarily avoid. Then we have no manner of Motive or Reaſon to Will, that can ſtrike our Underſtanding, put it in Suſpenſe, and cauſe us to enter into a ſerious Debate to know, if it be expedient to do ſuch an Action, or let it alone. It is thus, that a Man ſound in Body and Mind, virtuous and guided by Religion, is not free to throw himſelf headlong out of a Window, to run naked about the Street, and to murder innocent Children. In this Condition he can have no manner of Reaſon to will commit thoſe Actions, no Room to deliberate with himſelf about it, nor a real Indifference of his Will in that reſpect. Therefore he is not free to do thoſe Actions. There could be nothing but a melancholy Madneſs, or a Deſpair like to that of ſeveral Heathens, which cou'd bring a Man to ſuch violent Meaſures; but as we feel within ourſelves a true Incapacity of committing ſuch wild Actions, whilſt

whilſt we have yet the Uſe of our Reaſon, we feel on the contrary that we are free about all thoſe Choices which we ſeriouſly deliberate upon. And indeed nothing could be more ridiculous, than to deliberate if we had it not in our Power to chuſe, and if we were always invincibly determined to one only Side. Yet we often deliberate and we cannot doubt, but that our Deliberations are well grounded as often as they refer to ſeveral Ends, which have all their fair Side and their Motives to draw us into them. We ought, therefore, to believe that the whole Life of Man is tranſacted as in the mere Illuſion of a Dream, in Deliberations which are but Childrens Play; or we muſt conclude, That we are free in all the common Occurrences in which all Mankind thinks he deliberates, and even decides at his own Pleaſure. It is thus that I determine my ſelf to riſe, or to remain ſeated, to ſpeak or be ſilent, to keep back my Dinner or to take it without Delay. It is in ſuch Things, that it is impoſſible for Man to bring the Exerciſe of his Liberty ſeriouſly in Queſtion.

VI.

We muſt own beſides, That Man is not free either in Reſpect to Good taken in general, or in Reſpect to the *Summum Bonum* clearly known. Liberty conſiſts in a ſort of *Equilibrium* of the Will between two different Objects. Man cannot chuſe but between Objects worthy in themſelves of ſome Preference and of ſome Love; and which betwixt 'em make a ſort of Counterpoize. There is Occaſion on each Side for ſome Reaſons true or probable to determine the Will; theſe are call'd *Motives*. Good only, whether truly ſo or only apparent, can excite the Will; for Evil in the Shape of Evil, without any Mixture of Good in it, is a Nothing entirely deſpoiled of all Deſirableneſs. The Exerciſe of Liberty therefore ought to be grounded on a ſort of Over-weight that is between the different good Objects propos'd. The Underſtanding and the Will muſt needs be in a Ballance between thoſe good Objects, whether true or apparent. Now it is manifeſt, that if you put on the one Side Good conſider'd in a general View, that is, The whole of all good Objects without Exception; That you can put in

in the other Scale but the nothing of all Goodneſs; and that the Will cannot poſſibly find it ſelf in any Suſpenſe, or ſeriouſly debate what to chuſe, *All or Nothing*. Beſides, if we ſuppoſe the *Summum Bonum* preſent and clearly known, it is impoſſible to oppoſe him any other Good that can out-weigh it.

The Infinite, without Doubt, outweighs the Finite; the Diſproportion betwixt them is infinite. The Underſtanding can neither doubt, heſitate, nor ſuſpend its Deciſion one Moment. The Will is forcibly raviſh'd and drawn into Conſent. Deliberation in this Caſe would not be a Deliberation but a *Delirium*, and a *Delirium* is impoſſible in a State wherein we ſuppoſe ſupreme Truth and Goodneſs moſt clearly preſent and known as ſuch. It is impoſſible then to heſitate about the *Summum Bonum*, unleſs it be only known with a ſuperficial, imperfect and confuſed Knowledge, which debaſes it ſo as to make it compared with Goods infinitely below it. Then doth the Darkneſs of that great Object, and the Diſtance in which it is beheld, make a Sort of Compenſation to the Smallneſs of the finite Object which is

preſent and apparent to our Senſes. In the Caſe of this falſe Equality Man deliberates, chuſes and exerciſes his Liberty between two Goods infinitely unequal. But if the ſupreme Good ſhould ſhow it ſelf at once and evidently, with its infinite and Almighty Charm, it would inſtantly raviſh the whole Affection of the Will, and make all other Good diſappear, as broad Day-light diſſipates the Shades of Night. It is eaſy to ſee that moſt of the Goods, which offer themſelves to us in the Courſe of our Lives, are either ſo mean in themſelves, or ſo ſhaded, that they leave us in a Condition to compare them together. It is by comparing, that we deliberate to make our Choice; and when we do deliberate, we feel in our inward Conſcience that we are the Maſters of our Choice, becauſe the Sight of none of thoſe Goods is powerful enough to deſtroy all Counterpoize, and to draw off our Will invincibly. It is in the Counterpoiſe of the oppoſite Good that Liberty is exerciſed.

VII.

Take away this Liberty, all human Life is overturn'd, and there is not the leaſt Trace of Order left in Society. If Men

Men are not free in the Good or Evil they do, Good is no longer Good, Evil is no longer Evil. If an unavoidable and irreſiſtible Neceſſity forces us to will all what we will, our Will is no more anſwerable for its Willing, than the Springs of a Machine are reſponſible for the Motion which was unavoidably and irreſiſtibly placed therein. In that Caſe it is ridiculous to accuſe the Will, which will not, but as much as another Cauſe different and diſtinct from it forces it to will. You muſt directly aſcend to that Cauſe, as, I accuſe the Hand which moves a Stick to ſtrike me, without blaming the Stick it ſelf, which ſtrikes no farther or no more than the Hand moves it. Again, if you take away Liberty, you leave on Earth, Virtue, Vice nor Merit. Rewards are ridiculous, and Puniſhments unjuſt and hateful. Each Man doth but what he ought, ſince he acts neceſſarily. He is not bound to avoid what is unavoidable; nor overcome Difficulties that are inſuperable. All Things are according to Order; for Order conſiſts in every Thing giving Way to Fate or Neceſſity. What can be more ſtrange then, than to contradict one's own Idea's; that is, the Voice of Reaſon; and to be obſtinate

obſtinate in the Defence of what one is forc'd to gainſay every Moment in Practice; and then to eſtabliſh a Doctrine which overthrows all Order, all Polity, which confounds Vice with Virtue, authoriſes all monſtrous Infamy, deſtroys all Shame and Remorſe, degrades and defaces for ever all human Kind? Whence that Deſire to ſtifle thus the Voice of Reaſon? It is to ſhake off the Yoke of Religion; it is to produce a flattering Unability in Behalf of Vice, in Oppoſition to Virtue. Nothing but the moſt unruly Pride and Paſſions could urge Man on to ſo violent an Exceſs againſt his own Reaſon. But that very Extravagance ought to open that Man's Eyes who gave into it. Ought not Man to be miſtruſtful of the Corruptions of his Heart, and decline to be his own Judge, as ſoon as he perceives that the immoderate Deſire of Evil doth carry him ſo far as to contradict himſelf, and to deny his own Liberty, whoſe inward Conviction doth at each Moment overcome him? So enormous and outrageous a Doctrine (as *Cicero* ſtiles that of the *Epicureans*) ought not to be debated in the Schools, but puniſh'd by the Civil Magiſtrate.

VIII.

VIII.

They ask, how the infinitely perfect Being, who always, according to his Nature, tends to the greateſt Perfection in his Work, can have created free Agents, that is, left them to their own Choice betwixt Good and Evil, Order and the Overthrow of all Order? Why ſhould it be thought that he abandon'd them to their own Weakneſs, foreſeeing that the Uſe they would make of their Liberty would end in their own Ruine, and the diſordering the whole Work of God?

I anſwer, that what they pretend to deny, is unanſwerably true. On the one hand it is own'd, That there is an infinitely perfect Being, who has created Man; on the other hand, all Nature calls to us that our Will is free. Shew me the Man who is not aſhamed to deny it, I will force him to own it thirty or more Times every Day, in all the moſt ſerious Occurrences of his Life; Truth will come from him in ſpite of his Reſolution, even when he ſhall be arguing againſt it. It is evident therefore, that the infinitely perfect Being has created us free Agents. The Fact as clear as the Day is deciſive. Men may ſpin the

the Thread of Argument very fine, to prove that the infinitely perfect Being had it not in his Power to give that Imperfection to his Creature, and place therein that Spring of all Confuſion. The Anſwer is ſhort and cutting. The infinitely perfect Being knows much better than we what becomes his infinite Perfection. And it is evident that Man, who is his Creature, is free, and it cannot be denied without contradicting one's own Reaſon. Therefore the infinitely perfect Being has found that the Liberty of Man was conſiſtent with the infinite Perfection of the Creator. It is requiſite therefore that the finite rational Being ſhould humble it ſelf and be ſilent, when the infinitely perfect Being doth in Practice make out the whole Queſtion; without doubt he has not deſtroy'd Order. It follows then that he has mae Man free, ſince Man himſelf cannot ſtifle the Cry of his Conſcience, proclaiming his Liberty; and it follows thence alſo that God could make Man a free Agent without violating Order. If narrow-ſighted Man cannot conceive, how that Liberty, the Spring of all Diſorder, can agree with that perfect Harmony and ſupreme Order in the Work of God;

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he ought with Humility to believe what he doth not underſtand; It is his very Reaſon that keeps him conſtantly in Chains by that irreſiſtible Impreſſion of his Free-Will: Altho' he ſhould not with his Reaſon comprehend a Truth about which however his Reaſon admits no Doubt, he ought to look on that Truth with the ſame Eyes as he doth on many others in Natural Philoſophy, which we can hitherto neither ſet in a true Light, nor yet ſeriouſly call into Queſtion; as for Example; The Truth of *Matter* which we can neither ſuppoſe to be compounded of Atoms, nor diviſible *ad infinitum*, without inſuperable Difficulties.

IX.

There is a wide Difference betwixt the Perfection of the Workman and that of the Work it ſelf. The Workman can do nothing but with an infinite Perfection, for he can never degrade himſelf or loſe any Thing of his own Perfection; But the Work of the infinitely perfect Workman can never have but a limited Perfection. If the Work had an infinite Perfection, it would become the very Workman, for nothing beſides God himſelf

ſelf can be infinitely perfect. Nothing can be equal to him. Nothing can be more than infinitely below him; whence we ought to conclude, that notwithſtanding his Omnipotence, he cannot produce any Thing out of him but what muſt be infinitely imperfect, that is, infinitely inferior to his own ſupreme Perfection. To conceive what God is able to produce out of himſelf, we muſt behold him as ſeeing infinite Degrees of Perfection below his own, either by raiſing up to him, or by going downwards from him. So that he cannot fix any of his Works where it ſhall not have an infinite Progreſſion below himſelf. All theſe different Degrees are more or leſs exalted in Reſpect to each other, but all of them are infinitely inferior to the ſupreme Being. So that Men are evidently miſtaken, when they are pleas'd to fancy, that the infinitely perfect Being cannot refuſe to himſelf, for the Preſervation of his Perfection and his Order, giving to his Creature the greateſt Order and the greateſt Perfection, which he is able to give it. On the contrary it is certain, That God cannot fix any one of his Creatures to that certain and determin'd Degree of Perfection, but what he might have put it

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in another ſuperior Degree of Order and Perfection, raiſing it ſtill more towards the infinite Perfection, which is himſelf. So that it is beyond Diſpute, That God, far from willing always the higheſt Degree of Order and Perfection, can never proceed in raiſing his Work to it, but ſtops always at a Degree inferior to ſuch others as climb for ever towards the Infinite. Why ſhall we wonder then, that God has not made the Will of Man ſo fully perfect as he might have made it. It is true, That he might from the Beginning have made it incapable of Sinning, Bleſſed, and of the ſame Stamp with that of the Celeſtial Spirits. But the Objection made before, would ſtill remain in its full Force; ſince there are ſtill above the Celeſtial Spirits, who are limited, infinite Degrees of Perfection aſcending towards God, in which ſuperior Degrees the Creator might have created Beings ſuperior to the very Angels. We muſt therefore agree to one of theſe Things; Either that God cannot produce any Thing out of himſelf, becauſe all he ſhould thus create would be infinitely below himſelf, and conſequently infinitely imperfect: Or we muſt, *bona fide*, own, That God in making of his

his Creature, doth never chuſe the higheſt Degree of Order and Perfection. This one Truth is ſufficient to make the whole Objection vaniſh. It is true, God had made Man more perfect and more partaking of his ſupreme Order (that is more to his own Image) in making him at firſt impeccable and bleſſed, than in making him a free Agent: But it was not his Pleaſure, becauſe his infinite Perfection doth not indiſpenſably oblige him to give always ſuch a Degree of Perfection to his Work, but that there be ſtill left others above it *ad infinitum*. Every Degree has an Order and a Perfection worthy of the Creator, tho' ſuperior Degrees have both greater. Man, as a free Agent, is good in it ſelf, conſiſtent with Order, and worthy of God, tho' Man incapable of Sin would certainly have been a more perfect Creature,

X.

Tho' God made Man free, he did not abandon him to himſelf; he enlighten'd him with Reaſon. He is himſelf within Man to inſpire him with Virtue; to warn him at the leaſt Evil he is guilty of; to attract him with his Promiſes; to with-hold and refrain him with his Threats;

Threats; to ſoften and move him with the Marks of his Love. He pardons us, rebukes us, waits for us, bears with our repeated Ingratitude and Neglect, he is unwearied in his Invitations to the laſt Moments of our Lives, and our whole Life is a continued Chain of his Favours and Grace. I confeſs, That if we conceive Men without the Liberty to do good, of whom God requires Virtues impoſſible for 'em to perform, that it ſtrikes a Horror to think God has thus forſaken them; it is contrary to his Order and his Goodneſs: But it is not contrary to Order, That God ſhould have left it to the Choice of Man aſſiſted with his Grace either to make himſelf happy by being virtuous, or unhappy by being a Slave to Vice; ſo that if he be depriv'd of the heavenly Reward, it is becauſe he has thrown it from him when it was in a manner in his own Power. In that State Man ſuffers no Harm but what he doth to himſelf, having it fully in his Choice to procure to himſelf the greateſt Happineſs.

XI.

When God made Man, he imprinted in him a wondrous Reſemblance of that Divinity

Divinity of which he bears the Image. It is a wonderful Power in the dependant and created Being, that his Dependance doth not take away his Liberty, but that he may qualify himſelf as he pleaſes. He makes himſelf either good or bad at his own Choice, he turns his Will towards Good or Evil, and he is, like God, Maſter of his inward Sentiments and Operations: He has even, like God, a Mixture of Liberty, with Reſpect to ſome Goods, and of Conſtraint and Neceſſity to others. In the like Manner as God is neceſſitated to love himſelf, and to love nothing but what is good, ſo Man cannot love but what has ſome Degree of Goodneſs; and he loves God neceſſarily aſſoon as he has a full and evident Knowledge of him. But on the other Hand, God infinitely ſuperior to every good Thing different from himſelf, finds himſelf, by Means of that infinite Superiority, entirely free to chuſe which he pleaſes among all thoſe ſubaltern Goods; which tho' unequal to each other, yet have a ſort of Equality amongſt 'em, in that they all are infinitely inferior to the higheſt Good. So that none of 'em is perfect enough to determine God, and each of 'em leaves him

him to his own Choice and Determination. Man has ſomething of the ſame Liberty. None of all the Goods which he knows here on Earth overcomes his Will, none determines him invincibly; all of them leave him to his own Determination. He is his own, he deliberates, decides, and has a Supream Empire over his own Will. Certainly there is in that Empire over ones ſelf a ſurpriſing Character of Likeneſs with the Godhead. That Feature of Likeneſs is worthy of the Complacency of him who owes to himſelf to make all things for his own ſake.

XII.

Is it not worthy of God that by making a right Uſe of that Liberty he enables Man to merit? What is greater for a Creature than to merit? Merit is the Purchaſe of one's own Choice, and which makes Man worthy of Goods of a higher Nature. By Merit Man raiſes, aggrandiſes, perfects himſelf, and engages God to beſtow on him greater Goods proportioned to his Merit, *call'd Rewards.* Is it not beautiful, and according to Order, That God would not make Man happy, but after he had given him room to deſerve it? That Succeſſion of Degrees by

by which Man riſes, is without doubt agreeable to the Wiſdom of God and fit to eſtabliſh his Work: It is true that Man cannot merit, without being expoſed to become guilty for not meriting. But it is not to draw Man into Guilt, that God allows Liberty; he beſtows it only to make him capable of meriting; and it is only for the ſake of Merit, which is his only end, that he bears with the Guilt to which Liberty makes Man liable. It is againſt God's Intention and contrary to what he propoſes by his Aid, That Man makes an ill Uſe of ſo excellent a Gift, which is ſo well adapted to make him more perfect.

XIII.

God by giving Liberty to Man deſign'd to manifeſt his Goodneſs, Magnificence, and his Love, in ſuch a Manner however, that if Man, contrary to his Intention, ſhould make an ill Uſe of that Liberty, by abandoning Order in Sinning, God would make him return into Order in another manner by the Puniſhment of his Sin. So that all free Agents are ſubject to that Order, ſome by loving it and perſevering in that Love, others by returning to it in repenting of their Treſpaſſes; others by ſuffering a juſt Puniſhment for their final

final Impenitence. So that Order prevails over all Men; it is inviolably preſerv'd in the Guiltleſs, repair'd in converted *Sinners*, and revenged with and by an eternal Juſtice, which is itſelf ſupreme Order, in the impenitent Sinners. How glorious it is to that Wiſdom thus to draw Good out of Evil itſelf, and to turn Evil into Good? By permitting Evil, God is not the Author of it, What is his own in his Creature, remains worthy of him; but he ſuffers that his Work, which is always infinitely imperfect in itſelf, may leſſen that Degree of Goodneſs, which he hath plaed therein. He ſuffers it to decay a little, o have the Honour of repairing it by Grace or puniſhing it with Juſtice; if he eglects or deſpiſes proffer'd Mercies. Oh! ow glorious it is to God thus to glorify he two different parts of his Order and Goodneſs. The one is to reward Virtue, he other to puniſh Vice. If he had not made Man free, he could not have manifeſted ither his Mercy or his Juſtice; he could ot have rewarded Merit, puniſhed Guilt, or converted the deviating Sinner. He a manner ow'd himſelf theſe different inds of Glory; he allows them to himſelf ithout leſſening his Goodneſs, of which very Man partakes. Shall we wonder that

he is oblig'd to glorify himſelf ſo many different Ways, if we give heed to the depth of God's Counſel in what relates to the Permiſſion of Sin? We cannot find any thing unjuſt towards Man, ſince he doth not ſuffer him to go aſtray without giving him at the ſame time all the neceſſary Helps to prevent it. If we look on that Permiſſion with reſpect to God himſelf, it contains nothing that alters his Order and his Goodneſs, ſince he only permits what he neither doth himſelf nor incites Man to do. To Sin he oppoſes all the Helps of Reaſon and his Grace; only he doth not employ his Omnipotence to hinder Man from falling into it, becauſe he will not violate the *Free Will* which he has left to Man in favour of Merit; and what Order loſes by his Goodneſs and Rewards, it regains at the ſame time by his Juſtice and Puniſhment of Sin. So that Order, which has two eſſential Parts, ſubſiſts entire by means of this alternative of Mercy and Juſtice, to either of which every one is to be ſurrendred.

What ought we therefore to conclude upon the three Queſtions propos'd?

The infinitely perfect Being has created us for his own Sake, that is, The

e may be buſied with admiring, cele-
rating and loving him. That is his
Vorſhip. The external Signs of that
Vorſhip are neceſſary to notify it to
oſe who are unacquainted with it; to
engthen and perfect it in thoſe who
ve already imperfectly embrac'd it,
d to make it uniform in all, ſince all
ght to be united in this Publick Ado-
tion.

The Soul is Immortal ſince it has no
uſe of deſtruction in itſelf; ſince God
th not annihilate any Being, no not the
aſt Atom, and ſince he expreſly promi-
s us an Eternal life. The Freedom of
e Will is indiſputable. Thoſe who
ny it deſerve no Anſwer; they give
emſelves the Lie. We muſt either al-
ays ſuppoſe it, or give up our Reaſon,
d ceaſe to live like Men. What Nature
incibly teaches us is moreover certified
us by God's Authority ſpeaking in
e holy Scriptures. What keeps us from
lieving? Whence comes it that Man,
credulous in every thing that flatters
s Pride and Paſſions, creates ſo many
oubts and Scruples about thoſe Truths
hich ought to fill him with Joy and
mfort? Man is afraid to find a God
finitely good, who is pleaſed with his

Love, and expects from him a way of livi
that makes him happy. He fears le
his Soul ſhould not die with his Bo
and God after this miſerable and ſh
Life ſhould prepare him a heavenly
without end. He fears to find a God w
leaves him Maſter of his Deſtiny to ma
him happy upon being Virtuous, or
happy through his Guilt, and who chu
the Service of free Agents. Whence do
ſo unnatural a Fear proceed, and an U
belief ſo contrary to our greateſt Intereſt
It is becauſe Self-Love is a fooliſh Lo
an extravagant Love, an out of the w
Love, that betrays itſelf. He is mu
more afraid to ſtifle his Paſſions and V
nity a little, during the ſmall time whi
is allotted him here on Earth, than
loſe the higheſt Good, to renounce
eternal Life, or to precipitate himſelf
an eternal deſpair. What can we exp
from the Reaſonings of a Mind thus
ſtempered, and ſo fearful of admitti
proper Remedies for its Cure? Should
be willing to hearken ſeriouſly to a M
who in any other Matters ſhould appro
himſelf ſo full of Prejudices againſt
real Advantage? There is but one R
medy for all theſe Evils, which is, t
Man re-enter into the bottom of his He
a

nd Soul, not to poſſeſs himſelf, but to ffer himſelf to be poſſeſs'd by God; he ught to pray to him, to liſten to his oice, to miſtruſt himſelf, to truſt in im, to condemn his Pride; to ask for ccours in his Weakneſs, to reſtrain all is Paſſions; and to acknowledge that Self-ove, being the Wound and Defect of his eart, he cannot meet with Health and eace of Mind but in the Love of God.

LETTER III.

Concerning GOD and RELIGION.

SIR,

YOUR Letter might very well require for Anſwer a Treatiſe Compoſed by the moſt eminent Hand. I ſhall, in Obedience to your Commands, ſet down here ſome Thoughts, to which a Man of your Capacity will with little Trouble add what may be wanting.

REELECTI-

The REFLECTIONS *of a Man, who within himself Examines what he ought to Believe concerning Religion.*

I Find my self in this World without knowing either when I came, or how I came hither, or whither I am going. Some Men talk to me of many Things and propose them to me as indubitable; but I am resolved to doubt of them and even to reject them, unless upon Examination I find they deserve my Belief. The true use of that Reason I possess, is to believe nothing without knowing why I believe it, and without being determined to surrender my self to its having certain and sure signs of Truth. Some People would have me begin with a Contempt of all those Things that are called Mysteries in Religion; but I will be careful how I reject them before I have thoroughly examined them. There is as much Levity and

Folly in being an Unbeliever and ſtubborn, as there is in being credulous and ſuperſtitious. I will endeavour to find out a *medium*. I feel that my Reaſon is very weak, and my Will very oppoſite to the Snares of Pride and Paſſions, to find out that exact *medium*, and to keep always firm to it when found out. Yet I cannot by mere natural Strength make my ſelf either more penetrating or more patient in my Enquiries, more exact in my Reaſonings, or more regular in my good Diſpoſitions; neither more armed againſt Pride, nor more unbyaſſed in Favour of Truth, than I am already. I am left alone to make this Enquiry, and it is of my ſelf I am ſincerely miſtruſtful, from vaſt Numbers of unhappy Experiments I have made from the Raſhneſs of my Judgments, and the Corruption of my Heart. What is left for me to do in this weak Condition? Oh! if it be true that there is ſome Being above Man, ſome Being more powerful and better than himſelf upon whom he depends; I conjure that Being through his Goodneſs to aſſiſt me with his Power; he ſees my ſincere Deſire, how I miſtruſt my ſelf and have recourſe to him. Oh! Infinitely perfect Being, if it be true, that

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your exiſt and hear the Deſires of my Heart, ſhow your ſelf to me, take off the Veil that covers your Face; ſave me from the Danger of not knowing you, of going aſtray far from you, or of loſing my ſelf in my vain Thoughts, whilſt I am ſeeking you! Oh! Supream Truth, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs! If it be true that you are all that is ſaid of you, and that you have made me for your Sake, ſuffer me not to be my own Slave, but take into your Poſſeſſion the Work of your own Hands! Open my Eyes, and ſhow your ſelf to your Creature.

CHAP. I.

Of my THOUGHTS.

I.

THAT, which I call SELF; is ſomething that thinks, knows or doth not know; that believes, is ſure, and ſaith, *I ſee with Certainty*; that doubts, miſtakes, perceives its Error, and

ſaith, *I was miſtaken.* That SELF, is ſomething, that wills and wills not, that loves Good, and hates Evil; that is ſenſible of Pleaſure and of Pain; that hopes, fears, deſires what it has not, and is pleaſed with what it poſſeſſes. That SELF is often irreſolute, and little agreeing with itſelf; it changes, repents, and then repents again to have repented. That SELF knows itſelf and doth govern itſelf; it has a ſort of an Empire over itſelf; for I cannot doubt but that I deliberate in order to chuſe between willing or not willing a thing, as having actually in my Power the Choice between theſe two Oppoſites. When I will, it is becauſe I am pleaſed to form ſuch a Will, and that I chuſe to will whilſt I was Maſter of not willing. That SELF therefore is what is called *free*, that is, Maſter of its own Will.

II.

Has this SELF always had an Exiſtence? Where was it? What was I an hundred Years ago? Perhaps I then was a Body; or to ſpeak more properly, many ſmall Bodies diſperſed here and there in different Shapes, which Motion has gathered together to compoſe therewith that Por-

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tion of Matter over which I have a ſingular Command, which commands me in its turn, and which I call my Body. Yet this Body an hundred Years ago did not exiſt thus, compoſed nor figurated as it is this Day, with the ſame or the like wonderful Organs; Then it did not Think: That *thinking ſelf* had then no Being. How came it to begin to think? Which way could it become of a Not-Thinking Being, which it was until a certain Day, yea, until a certain Minute, that *ſelf* that at once has begun to think, judge, and to will? Has it made itſelf, has it conferr'd on itſelf Thought, which it had not; and ſhoud it not have poſſeſs'd it to be able to give it to itſelf, or elſe take it from the Nothingneſs. Can the Nothingneſs of Thought give itſelf that Degree of Exiſtence which it wants itſelf, and has not to give? Which way then is that Thought, that Will, and that Liberty come to my Share, which I had not before? and where muſt I look for the Source thereof?

III.

Shall I believe, That the ſame Body is ſometimes capable of knowing, judging, willing, being free; and ſometimes of

not having either Knowledge, Judgment, Will or Liberty? Let us examine this Point a little. I ſuppoſe a Body reduced into the moſt ſubtle Duſt; If this Duſt was to be Subtiliſed *ad infinitum* I cannot conceive how the ſmall Bodies would be more capable of Thought than the great ones. Suppoſe ſome *Corpuſcula* round, and ſome ſquare, it appears to me that the round and the ſquare ones are equally incapable of knowing each other, or of willing. The Globules have no more Reaſon than the Triangles. The hooked Atoms have neither more Wit or Underſtanding than the Atoms without Hooks. An hundred thouſand Atoms, when linked together, have no more Thought, than each of them when ſingle and ſeparated from the reſt. The liquid Bodies have no more Thought in their Fluidity than the dry Bodies in their Conſiſtence. The moſt rapid River has neither more Will, nor a better Underſtanding than a Stone. The moſt impetuous Motion doth no more give Underſtanding to a Heap of Matter than Reſt doth. Take a piece of Matter, reduce it into the moſt ſubtle Powder, boyl it up, make it evaporate again in the ſhape of volatile Bodies, or

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elſe let the ſame undergo all the different kinds of Fermentations known to the Chymiſts; produce out of it the moſt rapid Whirlwind, or cauſe it to move in any manner you think fit, you ſhall never conceive that this Maſs, thus faſhioned, ſubtilized, and moved with Rapidity, doth know itſelf, or can arrive at ſaying to itſelf, I believe, I doubt, I will or will not. Durſt you ſay, that there is a degree of Fermentation, and one diſtinct Moment wherein this Maſs has neither Underſtanding nor Will; but that there is yet Occaſion for one laſt Degree of Fermentation, and that at the very ſubſequent Moment this Maſs will begin all on a ſudden to judge, to will, to ſay in itſelf, I believe and I will. How comes it that Children, who are taught by Nature only, and in whom Reaſon is not yet altered by any Prejudice, fall a laughing, when they are told that a Watch, which they hear move, has much Wit? It is becauſe Reaſon doth not permit to believe, that bare Matter, whatſoever Figure or Motion you allow it, ſhould ever think, judge or will? How comes it that ſo many People are ſhocked when they are told, That the Brutes are nothing but Machines. Is it not becauſe

theſe

theſe Men cannot apprehend that a mere Machine is capable of that Knowledge which they ſuppoſe in Brutes? So true it is that Reaſon has an Averſion to believe Matter capable of Thought, tho' it be ſubtiliſed, figurated, and moved to the utmoſt of our Conceptions.

IV.

But let us ſuppoſe any thing: Let us drive *Invention* even to Impoſſibility; Let us grant that the ſame Body which was a not-thinking one in the firſt Minute, becomes all on a ſudden a thinking, judging, willing one, and ſaying in the very ſecond Minute I *will*; our Difficulty is not a bit removed. If Thought be but a Degree of Being, which Bodies can acquire and loſe, we muſt at leaſt own it to be the higheſt Degree of Exiſtence that Bodies can acquire, and that this Perfection is much ſuperior to that of being extended and figurated. To know itſelf and other Beings, to judge, will, be free; that is without doubt a Degree of Exiſtence without Compariſon preferable to that of being a Maſs, which knows neither itſelf nor others, and is incapable of judging, willing or chuſing. Therefore I ask again, Who is it that has at once within one particular Minute, given

ven to a Heap of Matter that ſublime Degree of Exiſtence it had not in the very Minute before? That Heap could not beſtow on itſelf this ſo excellent Degree which it wanted, and of which we may ſay it had the Nothingneſs or Privation in itſelf; it could not receive it from other Bodies; for other Bodies, no more than this, cannot give what they have not. The whole Corporeal Nature jointly, ſuppoſing it intirely Corporeal and not thinking, cannot give, either to itſelf in general, or to any of its Parts, that ſuperior Degree of Exiſtence, which is called *Thinking*, and is not a dependent on the Exiſtence of Bodies. Beſides, no thinking Being whatever can give or communicate Thought or the Faculty of Thinking to any other Being different from itſelf. Bodies may be to each other the Occaſion of Motion, according to the Rules eſtabliſhed by a Power ſuperior to them all; but no limited Being can give to another that Degree of Exiſtence or Perfection which it has not.

The Privation of one Degree of Exiſtence is Nothingneſs of that very Degree. To give the Degree of Exiſtence to one that has it not, there is Occaſion in a manner to work upon Nothingneſs itſelf, and

and to cauſe a ſort of real Creation in it, in order to add to that inferior Being already exiſting, a new Degree of Exiſtence that raiſes it above itſelf. As to make that exiſt which had no manner of Exiſtence before, is in effect *Creating the whole* Being; ſo to make a certain Degree of Exiſtence to exiſt in a peculiar Body that had nothing of it, is in effect *Creating it in part.* And it is evident that the thinking Beings, which we know, are too weak and too imperfect, to have the Power to create in others a very high Degree of Exiſtence and Perfection, which in them had no Exiſtence. The Action of Creation belongs to and requires an infinite Power and Perfection. There is an infinite Diſtance betwixt the Non-Exiſtence of a Thing and its Exiſtence. It requires therefore an infinite Power to make that thing paſs from Non-Exiſtence to Exiſtence. Beſides, one ſhould have a Perfection in its higheſt Degree to be capable of becoming the Source thereof, to ſupply others with it, and to communicate it to what is the mere Nothingneſs and Privation of it. To have in one's ſelf that Fecundity and to effect without, the Communication of that Being, it is neceſſary to have the Fulneſs

neſs thereof in ones ſelf, through ones ſelf, in Property and in Store. Now, to poſſeſs Exiſtence through ones ſelf, is the higheſt Perfection. I therefore ſeriouſly bethink my ſelf and acknowledge that the thinking Beings, which are like my ſelf, are abſolutely incapable of that Fecundity, and of that Creation of Thought out of themſelves, in Subjects that have no manner of begining for it. Thinking Beings, that do miſtake, are ignorant, delight in Evil, hate Virtue, often contradict each other, and are oftner contrary to themſelves, cannot have that higheſt Perfection of Self-Exiſtence; they cannot be thinking to that Degree as to be Creators of Thought in others.

V.

It follows then that this SELF, which was not a Thinking Being an hundred Years ago is become Thinking through the Goodneſs of a Superior Being, which having thought of itſelf and fully, could make it come over into me, who was the Privation or Nothingneſs thereof. It follows that he poſſeſſed Thought in himſelf in that Fulneſs and Perfection that he had Power to beſtow it on ſuch as had it not. It follows that he could

make

make me ſtep from the Privation of Thought to a Thought exiſtent. It follows that he is a Creator in me at leaſt of that Degree of Exiſtence of which I was the mere Privation when I was but a ſmall Parcel of Matter. So that my Concluſion is abſolutely independent from the Queſtion that is debated, *Whether my Soul be diſtinct from my Body.* Without entring into that Debate, I find all I want to arrive at my only end. If Souls are diſtinct from the Bodies, I ask who is it that has united my Body and my Soul? Who has join'd two ſuch different Natures? They have not form'd a Partnerſhip by any Compact freely agreed upon among themſelves. The Body is not capable thereof. The Soul doth not remember to have made any ſuch Bargain; it would certainly have retained ſome Remembrance of it, if it had done it out of its free Choice. Beſides, if the Soul had done it freely, it might at Pleaſure break the Agreement; whereas we ſee it cannot put an end to it without deſtroying the Organs of the Body. On the other Hand, the other being like unto me, far from having eſtabliſhed in me that Union or mutual Society, are in the ſame Caſe, and as well as my ſelf,

look

look for a ſuperiour Cauſe of it. Laſtly, whence proceeds a Difference which I experience between that Parcel of Matter, which I call my Body, and all other neighbouring Bodies. Though I am never ſo willing that other Bodies, ſhould move, they ſtand ſtill for all my Wiſhes; my Will, when alone, has not even the Power of ſtirring the leaſt Atom; but as to the Heap of my own Body, as ſoon as my Will commands, that Heap immediately obeys. I will, and inſtantly all my Limbs turn which way I pleaſe. Who has given me that abſolute Power over them, whilſt I am ſo impotent in reſpect to all other Bodies which ſurround me? If on the contrary my Soul is nothing elſe but my Body become thinking, I ask who it is, that has created in my Body that Degree of Exiſtence, I mean Thought, which was not there before?

Chap. II.

Of my own Body, *and of all other Bodies in the Univerſe.*

I.

THERE is a Portion of Matter which I call *my Body* becauſe its Motions depend entirely from my Will, whereas no other Body depends upon it. That Portion of Matter ſeems to me framed on Purpoſe to perform all the Functions in which it is employed. I ſee a Body made with artful Symmetry; it is placed on two Thighs and two Legs of equal ſize and well proportion'd. Have I a Mind to remain ſtanding and unmov'd, my Thighs and Legs are ſtrait and firm like Pillars which ſuſtain the whole Edifice. On the contrary, have I a Mind to walk, thoſe two great *Coloſſuſes* are ready divided by Articulations and Joints; whilſt the one remains ſteady to ſuſtain me, the other advances to carry me towards

wards the Objects to which I have a Mind to be nearer; but that Body at the ſame time it inclines, knows how to faſten itſelf, ſo that it preſerves a perfect *equilibrium* to prevent its falling. The Body proportion'd to theſe two Supporters is ſtrenghten'd by Ribs well diſpoſed in Semicircles which join together before; they all come from the Back-bone, which is made up of Vertibres, which are ſmall but very hard Bones inſerted into each other, ſo that the Back is at the ſame time very ſtrait and very firm when I think fit, and very flexible to bow itſelf downwards or ſideways aſſoon as I find Occaſion. The Office of the Ribs is to ſhut in and preſerve in Safety the principal Organs, which are in a manner the Center of Life and are extreamly tender; yet they leave betwixt each of them an Openneſs exactly at the Place I want it, to facilitate the Expanſion or Contraction of all thoſe inward Parts either for Breathing or other vital Operations. My Heart is like the Spring whence flows with Impetuouſneſs the Blood which goeth through innumerable Conduits to moiſten and nouriſh the Muſcles of all the Members, juſt as Rivers do water the Fields to make them fruitful. That Blood which

which grows ſlower in its Courſe, returns from all the Extremities of the Body to the Center, to re-kindle its Flame and reſume new Spirits. The Lungs are like Bellows promoting Reſpiration. The Stomach is a Store-Room which receives all Aliments; it contains Juices proper for their Diſſolution, and for their Converſion into a ſort of Milk, which ſoon after becomes Blood. The Lung-Pipe, when well formed, is the moſt perfect of all Muſical Inſtruments. All is marvellous in the Body of Man, even the Inſtruments of thoſe meaneſt and loweſt Functions which Decency forbids to name. There is in this whole Body never an inward Spring but what ſurpaſſes all the Induſtry of the Mechaniſts. On the upper part of this Body hangs down two Arms divided in ſeveral Joints, ſo that they move all manner of ways; at the end of them are two Hands, which are lengthned and folded by means of the Joints of the Fingers armed with Nails. What could poſſibly be found out fitter than them to lay hold, to repulſe, to carry, to draw, to ſeparate Bodies linked together, to unravel things that are entangled, to compoſe either the coarſeſt or the fineſt Works of all ſorts of Materials?

Still

Still higher, the Neck is raiſed, which holds itſelf upright or bends down, turns to the right or the left according to Occaſion, and carries the Head, the principal Seat of all Senſation. The back-part of the Head is coverd with Hair, which either adorn or ſtrenghten it. The fore-part is the Face where two equal Eyes, and uniformly placed, ſeem to be blazing with a Celeſtial Flame. The Noſe is not only the Organ of Smelling but likewiſe adorns the Face by its Protuberance. The two Ears are ſeated on each ſide to facilitate hearing from the right or the left. Thoſe Organs of feeling are double, not only to make their Operation readier and eaſier on both ſides, but to be at Hand in Caſe ſome Accident ſhould happen to either. The Mouth, on account of the Lips, is a great Ornament to the Face: When it opens it ſhows a double Row of Teeth deſigned to break the Aliments, and to prepare them for eaſier Digeſtion. The voluble and moiſt Tongue ſtrikes the Palate and Teeth in ſo many different ways, that it articulates a ſufficient Number of Sounds thereof to compoſe all the Languages of the Univerſe. But I dare not undertake to deſcribe all that is wonderful

derful in the Structure of my Body, I only hint at the general Heads; it would be endleſs; the more we ſearch and the more we diſcover, we find every part of it far ſurpaſſing all the Art of the moſt skilful Men. The Body of Man is the moſt compound, and the moſt Induſtrious piece of Machinery.

II.

If from my own Body I proceed to other Bodies that ſurround me, I do not only perceive a great many Bodies like my own, but beſides I ſee every where Animals made after different Patterns. Some walk on four Feet, others have Wings to fly in the Air, and others have Finns to ſwim in the Waters. The Ships which Men build with ſo much Art, according to ſuch exact and difficult Rules, are only Copies made after them; Birds and Fiſhes, which ſway in the two liquid Elements, whereof the one is ſomewhat thicker than the other. Of theſe Animals, ſome are ſubſervient to us in carrying of Burthens, as the Camels; others ſupply with their Strength what we are not able to perform with our own, as the Oxen; which afterwards ſerves us for Food: the Sheep firſt nouriſh

riſh us with their Milk, and then cloath us with their Wool. Man has acquired the Art of ruling all theſe, either with his Strength or Induſtry, and makes them all ſubſervient to his Occaſions. A Worm, an Ant, a Gnat, ſhew an hundred times more Induſtry than the moſt compleat Watch of the beſt Artificer. The Earth that ſuſtains us draws out of its fruitful Boſom all we want for our Food, every thing iſſues out of it, and re-enters into it, to be born again every Year; it never is wore quite away. The more you tear up its Bowels the more it fills you with its Bounties to reward your Labour. It is covered with plentiful Crops, adorned with Greens, and together with Man feeds the Beaſts that are ſubſervient to Man, and afterwards Food for him. The Trees which it produces are great Garlands planted in its Boſom for its Ornament, in the ſame manner as Hair adorns the Heads of Men. Theſe Trees in the Summer refreſh us with their Shade, and their Wood warms us in the Winter. Their Fruit ſupended from their Boughs falls into our Hands as ſoon as ripe. The Plants have an infinite Variety, all of them have an Order that renders them uni-

form to a certain Degree, but beyond that, each of them is different, and there are not two Leaves upon a Tree in all points alike. The Bloſſoms which beautify all Nature are the promiſing Pledges of Fruits, and the Fruits which crown the Year ſpread Plenty juſt before that Seaſon, whoſe Rigour hinders Men from Labour. The Rivulets fall down from the Mountains. The Rivers, after having watered different Countries and made Trade eaſy to their Inhabitants, fall into the Sea, which far from depriving Men of each others Society is on the contrary the Center of Commerce between the moſt diſtant Nations. The Winds, which purify the Air and temperate the Seaſons, are the Soul of Navigation and of Trade between the ſeveral Nations. If the Air was but a little thicker we could not breath therein, it would be to us like a Sea wherein we could not avoid being drowned. Who is it that has been able to give it ſo adequate a Degree of Thinneſs and Fineneſs?

The Sun riſes and ſets to give us the Day and the Night. Whilſt it leaves us in the Quiet of Darkneſs it is gone to enlighten another part of the Globe oppoſite

oppoſite to ours. The Earth is a Globe ſuſpended in the Air, and this great Luminary turns round about it, becauſe it owes it its Rays, and is not only regular in its Rounds, which form Night and Day, but alſo in its Gradations to and from the Poles, which is the efficient Cauſe of Summer and Winter by turns, for each half of the Hemiſphere. If the Sun came but a little nearer to us we ſhould be ſcorched; if it receded but a little farther from us, we ſhould be frozen, and our vital Heat would be extinguiſhed. Who is it that conducts and guides with ſo much evenneſs that Flambeau of the Univerſe, that ſubtle and rapid Flame *

The Moon nearer to our Earth borrows from the Sun a ſoft Light that tempers the Darkneſs of the Night, and lights us when we cannot enjoy the Light of the Day, or wait for its Return. Obſerve how many Conveniencies there are to render the Life of Man eaſier!

* The Author has avoided here ſiding with either ſide of the Philoſophers in the Debate, Whether it be the Sun that turns about the Earth, or the Earth that turns about the Sun; his Deſign was to ſpeak in Conformity to the Opinion moſt commonly receiv'd by the People, or their Prejudices.

But what do I ſee! A prodigious Number of glittering and ſhining Conſtellations in the Firmament like ſo many Suns! At what a Diſtance are they from us! How prodigious and immenſe is their Size that confounds our Imagination, and ſtartles our very Soul! What do we ſeem to our ſelves! Deſpicable Atoms, ſeated we know not in what Corner of the Univerſe, when we behold theſe innumerable Suns. An Almighty Hand has ſown them profuſely, to make us aſtoniſhed at a Magnificence, which coſts him nothing.

III.

If I go into a Houſe, I there find Foundations laid of very hard Stone to make the Superſtructure durable; I ſee Walls rais'd high, with a top-covering which hinders the Rain from falling into it: I obſerve in the middle an empty Place, which is called a Yard, and which is the Centre of the whole; I meet with a Staircaſe whoſe Steps are viſibly made to aſcend by; Apartments ſeparated from each other for the Convenience of thoſe that inhabit this Houſe; Rooms with Doors to enter by; Locks and Keys to open and ſhut them; Windows to let

et the Light in, without admitting the Wind at the ſame time; a Chimney to make Fires in, without being diſturb'd by the Smoak; a Bed to reſt in, Chairs to ſit down, a Table to eat and a Deſk to write upon.

At the Sight of all theſe Conveniencies, manag'd with ſo much Art, I cannot doubt but that it is the Handy-Work of Men. I can never think they are Atoms which Chance has thus ranged together. It is no ways poſſible for me ſeriouſly to believe, That the Stones of this Building have rais'd themſelves upon each other with ſo much Order, as the Poets repreſent us the Walls of antient *Thebes* rais'd by the harmonious Lyre of *Amphion*.

Never will any Man in his Senſes affirm that this Houſe, with all its Furniture, made and furniſhed itſelf. The Order, Proportion, Symmetry, the manifeſt Deſign of the whole forbid us to aſcribe this to a blind Cauſe, ſuch as is Chance. It will be in vain for any Man to tell me that this Houſe made itſelf by mere Chance, and that Men, who found all thoſe things thus diſpos'd by mere Chance make uſe of them, and only fancy that they were made for their Uſe and on their Account. Such Thoughts cannot

enter into the Minds of rational Men. It is juſt ſo with *Homer's* Iliad; or a Watch found in a deſart Iſland; no body could ever imagine that admirable Poem, or that artful Watch were the Effect of mere Chance; it would immediately be concluded, That it was ſome ſublime Poet who had compos'd thoſe fine Lines, and that a skilful Maſter had made that Watch. Thoſe are ſufficient Premiſſes to form our Coucluſion upon. The Work of the whole Univerſe has an hundred times more Art, Order, Wiſdom, Symmetry and Proportion, than all the moſt artful Productions of the moſt skilful Men. It is therefore a blind Obſtinacy to refuſe acknowledging the Almighty Hand which has formed the Univerſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Power which has form'd my Body, and made me a Thinking Being.

I.

I Acknowledge therefore, That undoubtedly it was an All-wiſe and Almighty Power which ordered the Univerſe and ſhaped that peculiar Body which I call *my own*. I own that the ſame Supreme Power did without doubt add within me, to that *Body* a Thinking Being diſtinct from that Body; or that he has given to that Body the Faculty of thinking, which it had not, and that from not thinking as it was naturally, he has made it thinking, in the manner I now ſee it. If that Power has linked together thoſe two Natures, which we call *Body and Soul*, and are ſo unlike, it follows that this Power muſt be ſuperior to both

thoſe Natures; he ought to have an equal and ſupreme Authority over both; he muſt contain within himſelf the whole Perfection of each of them; he ought to be capable to ſubject them by his mere Will to that mutual Harmony betwixt the Motions of the Body and the Thoughts of the Soul; that ſupreme Being ought to be ſo much Maſter of Bodies as to be able to give to a Spirit ſuch a Power over a Body as we commonly aſcribe to God. My Will, which of itſelf has no Power over any other Body, ſo as to force it to act, needs only to will; and that Body, which I call my own, immediately obeys its command: You would think that it knows and hears the Order of my Will, it pays Obedience to it much in the ſame manner as we ſay all Beings do obey the Voice of God. What ſupreme Power is this that is given to my Mind over my Body! How powerful and perfect muſt he be, who gives to a Being ſo limited and impotent, ſo much Power over another Being ſo widely different from itſelf? He certainly carries in himſelf the Univerſality of Beings; that is, the univerſal Perfection of all kinds; he moſt eminently unites in himſelf the whole real

Perfection

Perfection of Spirits and Bodies, and has the ſupreme Empire over thoſe different Natures, even to a Capacity of communicating this Power to one of theſe Natures over the other, in order to form that Union which compoſes Man.

If on the contrary that Power has not placed in me a double Nature, but has only been the Cauſe, that my Body, which did not think, has at a certain Point of Time begun to think, it follows that this Power has created in me that new Degree of Exiſtence; it muſt be that this Power by its infinite Fecundity has made that Being, which I call *my ſelf*, paſs from the Privation or Nothingneſs of Thought to the Exiſtence of Thought, which is now my own.

Which is then that Voice that calls out of Nothing a very exalted Degree of Exiſtence, which was not in me before, and makes it exiſt in me? that Creation of Thought in an inanimate, blind, and inſenſible Maſs, is, without doubt, a Work of the Almighty. See there a Creator: If he is not ſuch as to my firſt Degree of Exiſtence, which is to be a Heap of Matter, he is at leaſt the Creator of the ſecond Degree of Exiſtence, in me, which is far ſuperior, *viz.* That

of a Thinking Being. But how can we conceive him to be the Creator of the ſuperior Degree of Exiſtence if he was not ſuch of the inferior? How could a vile and inanimate Maſs receive from him ſo high a Degree of Perfection, if it was not dependent on him? Beſides, how is it probable, that the moſt perfect Degree of Exiſtence, *viz.* that of Thinking, Judging and Willing freely, ſhould be dependant on him; ſo that he can create and give it when he pleaſes to the meaneſt Beings that are depriv'd of it; and yet that the loweſt Degree of Exiſtence, *viz.* being a mean and inanimate Maſs of Matter, ſhould exiſt of it ſelf and be independent of that Power? If it was ſo, we could not avoid ſaying, That the loweſt Degree of Exiſtence poſſeſſes the higheſt Perfection, which is, to exiſt of itſelf, to be independent; in a word, to be uncreated; and that the higheſt Degree of Exiſtence has the greateſt Imperfection; to wit, That of being dependent, not to exiſt of it ſelf; to have but a borrowed Exiſtence; in a Word, to be only a created Being.

It is apparent therefore, That the Power which re-unites in it ſelf all thoſe different Degrees of Exiſtence and creates them

them in me by his own good Pleaſure, cannot be otherwiſe than infinitely perfect. It muſt neceſſarily exiſt of it ſelf, ſince it cauſes every thing to exiſt that is diſtinct from it ſelf. We muſt own that carries in it ſelf the Fullneſs of Being, ſince it poſſeſſes it to ſuch a Degree as to communicate it to Nothingneſs. It muſt have the Univerſality of Exiſtence, ſince it has an equal Empire over all Natures, and all the different Degrees of Perfection: In ſhort, it muſt be equally wiſe and powerful, ſince it frames, beautifies, and conducts the Univerſe with ſuch an Art and Order, as is viſible even from the leaſt Inſects to the very Stars, and Man himſelf, who having the Faculty of Thinking is a more excellent Being than all the reſt together.

Chap. IV.

Of the Worſhip due to that Power.

I.

IT follows then, that this firſt Being, which I acknowledge as the fertile Spring of all others, has drawn and made me out of Nothing. I was Nothing, and it is through him alone I have begun to be all what I am. It is in him that I have Being, Motion and Life. He has taken me out of Nothing to make me whatever I am; he ſtill upholds me every Moment with his Hand, as ſuſpended in the Air over the Abyſs of Nothingneſs, wherein my own Weight would make me relapſe, if he left me to my ſelf; and he continues Exiſtence to me, which was not natural to me, and to which he inceſſantly raiſes me, notwithſtanding

withſtanding my Frailty, through a Bounty which has occaſion to be repeated every Moment of my Duration. I am then but a borrow'd Being, but half a Being, but a Being that is continually betwixt Exiſtence and Nothingneſs, but a Shadow of the immutable Being. That Being is all and I am Nothing, at leaſt I am but a weak Thing derived from his Plenitude without Bounds. I have not only received at his Hands certain Gifts: That, which has receiv'd the firſt of his Gifts, is Nothingneſs; for there was nothing in me, pre-exiſtent to all his Gifts, and capable of receiving them. The firſt of his Gifts that has been the Foundation of all the reſt, is, what I call *my Self*. He has given me that Self; I owe him not only all what I have, but beſides, all what I am. O incomprehenſible Gift! Which is ſoon named in our inſignificant Language, but what the Underſtanding of Man will never rightly apprehend the depths of! That God who has made me, has given me *my ſelf* to *my ſelf*; that *ſelf* I love ſo much, is no leſs than a Preſent from his Bounty: That God ought therefore to be within me and I in him, if I may ſpeak thus, ſince it is of him I received this *ſelf*.

Without

Without him I had not been this *ſelf*; without him I ſhould not have that *ſelf* to be an Object of my Love, nor the Love with which I love that *ſelf*, nor the Will that loves it, nor the Thought by which I know my ſelf. The whole is a Gift; he who receives the Gift, is himſelf the firſt Gift receiv'd. O God! Thou art my true Father: It is Thou, who haſt given me my Body, my Soul, my Extenſion and my Thought: It was Thou that bideſt me Be, and inſtantly I began to Be, when I was not before. It is Thou that haſt loved me, not becauſe I exiſted already, and did already deſerve thy Love, but on the contrary, that I might begin to Exiſt, and that thy previous Love might make ſomething lovely of me: It is my Nothingneſs therefore that thou didſt love from all Eternity, to give it a Being, and make it worthy of thee.

II.

O God! I owe thee all, ſince I receiv'd all from thee, and owe thee even this ſelf, which has receiv'd ſo much from thy bounteous Hands! I owe thee all, O infinite Goodneſs! But what ſhall I return thee? Thou haſt no occaſi-

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on for any thing I have, ſince all came from thee. Far from hoarding up for thy ſelf, thou haſt heap'd thy Bleſſings on me. Even when they are in my Hands, they are rather thine than mine, ſince I have my ſelf no Exiſtence but in thee. I have them only upon truſt, but thou poſſeſſeſt them as thy own. Thou can'ſt not intirely diveſt thy ſelf of them, ſo eſſential it is that all Good ſhould remain in thee. What then ſhall I give thee? There remains nothing in my Power to offer thee but *my ſelf*, but what I call *my ſelf* is no leſs thine than all the reſt. Once more, what ſhall I pretend to give thee, who have receiv'd all at thy Hands? O eternal Love! Thou requireſt but one Thing of me, which is the free-will of my Heart! Thou haſt left it free to me, that I might freely like and chuſe that immutable Subordination which ought for ever to retain my Heart in thy Power: Thou only willeſt that I ſhould agree to that Order, which conſtitutes the Happineſs of all the Creation: But that I may do ſo, thou ſheweſt me outwardly all the Charms thereof, to make it appear lovely to me; and beſides, thou entereſt with the ſtrong Allurements of thy Grace within my Heart,

Heart, to move its Springs, and to make me love what ſo well deſerves it. So that thou art at the ſame time the Object and the Author of my Love, at the ſame time the Loving, and the Well-beloved. Thou loveſt thy ſelf in me, and how is it poſſible that thy vile and corrupt Creature could worthily love thee, if thou didſt not take care to love thy ſelf in him.

The Incenſe of Men, is, with reſpect to thee, but a deſpicable Smoak, thou needeſt not either the Fat or the Blood of their Sacrifices; their Ceremonies are but a vain Spectacle, their richeſt Offerings are too Poor for thee, and more thy own than theirs: Their very Praiſes are but a lying Speech, unleſs they adore thee in Spirit and in Truth. No Service can be acceptable to thee but what is Love. External Signs are good when proceeding from the Heart; but the eſſential Worſhip of thee is nothing but Love, and thy Kingdom is entirely within thy ſelf; it would be a groſs Miſtake to ſearch for it out of thee. O Love! To love thee is all in all; the whole of Man; all beſides it is not him, it is only his Shadow. Whoever doth not love thee

thee is a Stranger to his own Nature, he has not yet began to live.

III.

But ought this Worſhip of Love to be thus lodged and confined in my Heart, as never to let me give any outward Signs of it? No! If I truly Love, it will be impoſſible to conceal my Love. Love wants to be active, and influence others to Love. Can I ſuffer other Men, whom God has made for his own Sake, as well as my Self, to be ignorant of their Condition!

God is ſo Great a Being, that he owes all to himſelf. The inſolent Folly of Man, that deſpicable Creature, is to think of nothing but what he calls *himſelf*: It is this Idol of his Heart, which is the Object of God's Reſentment and Jealouſy. Nothing is more Unjuſt than only to conſider my ſelf for no other Reaſon but that it is my ſelf. This is no valuable Reaſon, it is no more than an impetuous Torrent of Self-love; on the contrary, God's ſupreme Juſtice ought to conſiſt, in not loving any thing but in Proportion to that Degree of Goodneſs which renders it lovely. He meets in himſelf innate Goodneſs, and Perfecti-

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on, conſequently he owes himſelf wholly to himſelf in the moſt ſtrict Juſtice. On the other Hand he finds in all of us but a limited and mix'd Goodneſs, impair'd by that Mixture. The Goodneſs he finds in us is no more than what himſelf placed there, and he can delight in nothing but his moſt gracious Bounty: He finds in us nought beſides Nothingneſs, Evil, and his own Gifts; he can therefore in ſtrict Juſtice be no ways beholden to us. He can love in us but his own Goodneſs, which ſurpaſſes our Nothingneſs and Malice: He cannot therefore remit any thing of his Rights, he would violate his own Order, and ceaſe to be what he is, if he did not do himſelf that ſtrict Juſtice. He could not therefore create Men with an Underſtanding and a Will, but with a Deſign that their whole Lives ſhould be employed in celebrating his ſupreme Truth, and loving his infinite Goodneſs. Such is the principal End of our Creation.

IV.

He has placed Men together in a Society, wherein they are bound to love and mutually help each other, like Children of the ſame Family, who acknowledge

ledge one common Father. Every Nation is but a Branch of that numerous Family, which is ſcatter'd over the Face of the whole Earth. The Love of that common Father ought to be apparent, manifeſt, and inviolably reigning in this whole Society of well-beloved Children. Each of them never ought to fail ſaying, to thoſe that are born from him, *know the Lord, who is your Father.* Thoſe Children of God ought to proclaim his Kindneſs, ſing his Praiſes, notify it to ſuch as are ignorant of it, and remind thoſe of it who forget it. They were placed on Earth for no other End than to know his Perfection, accompliſh his Will, and to communicate to each other that Knowledge and Celeſtial Love. What would it ſignify, if that Family kept up Society, and agreed in every thing elſe but in the Worſhip of ſo good a Parent? It is requiſite therefore there ſhould be a Society amongſt them for the worſhipping of God; and it is this which is called *Religion*; the meaning of which is, That all Men ought to inſtruct, edify, and love each other, in order to love and worſhip their common Father. The *Ground and Eſſential Part of Religion doth not conſiſt in any outward*

Ceremony

Ceremony, but entirely in the *Underſtanding of Truth*, and the *Love of the Sovereign Good*; but thoſe inward Sentiments cannot be *ſincere*, without being in a manner put in a Co-partnerſhip amongſt Men by ſome determin'd and apparent Signs. It is not ſufficient to know God, we muſt make it appear that we know him, and ſo conduct our ſelves that none of our Brethren may either remain ignorant of him, or forget him. Thoſe apparent Signs of Worſhip are commonly call'd *Religious Ceremonies*. Thoſe Ceremonies are no more than Tokens, by which Men have agreed to edify each other, and to awake in each other the Remembrance of that Worſhip which is in their Hearts. Beſides, weak and fickle Men have often Occaſion for thoſe viſible Tokens, to put themſelves in Mind of the Preſence of that inviſible God, whom they are bound to love. Thoſe Tokens have been inſtituted with a certain Degree of Majeſty, the better to repreſent the Grandeur of that heavenly Father. Moſt Men, incapable of fixing the Volatility of their Imagination, and hurried away by their Paſſions, have great Occaſion, That the Pomp of thoſe Signs, inſtituted for the common Worſhip of God

God, ſhould ſtrike and fetter their Imagination, That thereby all their Paſſions may become *calmer*, and be ſuſpended for a while. It is properly this, that is call'd Religion, Sacred Rites, and the Publick Worſhip of that God who has created us. Human kind cannot acknowledge and love his Creator, without ſhewing he loves him, without deſiring to make him belov'd, without expreſſing that Love, with that Magnificence proportion'd to the Being he loves; or laſtly, without inciting himſelf to love, by the very Tokens of his Love. This is that Religion which is inſeparable from the Belief of the Creator.

CHAP.

Chap. V.

Of the Religion of the Jews, *and of the* Meſſias.

SInce the firſt Being, who has created me, has made all Things for his own ſake, and requires of intelligent Creatures a Worſhip of Love, publickly celebrated in their Societies, I am bound to find out ſomewhere in the World that publick Worſhip to join my ſelf thereunto, and to celebrate it together with thoſe other Men who exerciſe it in Community. But where ſhall I meet with this ſo neceſſary Worſhip? God who refers all things to himſelf, without doubt never leaves himſelf without that Worſhip, which is the ſole End of his Work. As he has always produc'd his Creature, for the ſake of the Glory which

which he pleaſes to draw from that Worſhip; there can never have been a time wherein he had not form'd ſome kind of Worſhippers worthy of him. I therefore look round, examining all Ages and all Nations, to diſcover where that pure Worſhip worthy of the Creator is to be found.

I ſee a prodigious Number of Nations that have worſhipped Stones, Wood, Metal, and have believ'd that ſome God-like Beings were preſent and affix'd to thoſe particular Figures of Men or Beaſts, ſhap'd in thoſe different Manners; but certainly the Godhead cannot be confined to, nor contain'd within thoſe inanimate Figures. Beſides, thoſe they have Worſhipped, as *Jupiter*, *Juno*, *Mars*, *Venus*, *Mercury* and *Bacchus*, far from being real Gods, were only very vicious, mean and criminal Creatures. Men who worſhip the true God, Creator of the Univerſe, and regulate their Morals according to that Worſhip, deſerve undoubtedly a much greater Eſteem than ſuch Gods, guilty of the groſſeſt Vices. Even a Heathen has own'd that the Gods of *Homer* were very much inferiour to his Heroes. How ſtrangely degrading of the Divinity this is! How impious

impious and indecent was that Worſhip of ſo many falſe and unworthy Deities, who ſeem to have been invented by ſome ſeducing Mind, to turn Divinity into Ridicule, and to blot out the Memory of the true God!

And although ſome ingenious Men ſhould ſtrain Matters ſo as to reduce *Paganiſm* to the Worſhip of one only God, infinitely Perfect, adored by different Names, and under many different and myſterious Figures; when at the ſame time, the Heathens did not believe *Polytheiſm*; yet can we not avoid confeſſing that this viſible Multitude of Gods was very indecent and ſcandalous, that borrow'd Syſtem of Divinity, and Spring of impious Errors; and it was neceſſary to forſake that Variety of Names and myſterious Repreſentations of them, to reduce the whole divine Worſhip to the acknowledging of one only God, ſo perfect as not to have any thing his Equal, to be infinitely Superior to all Things, and having produc'd every individual Thing from the Abyſs of Nothingneſs, into which he could at Pleaſure re-plunge it every Moment. Beſides, the *Pagan* Religion offer'd to God no other Vows and Prayers but ſuch as proceeded from

a Thirſt

a thirſt after the good Things of the Earth; they pray'd only for Health and Wealth, for ſuch Pleaſures and worldly Happineſs as flatter'd their Pride. Such a Religion was a Diſgrace to Divinity, and an Authority for all the Vices and Corruptions of Men. But I want on the contrary a Worſhip worthy of the firſt Being, and that mends my Morals. Once more; where ſhall I find that, which certainly cannot but be in ſome Corner of the Earth, ſince it is only for its ſake that the Earth was made, and that Men have been Created for no other End, than to celebrate it.

I perceive in a Corner of the Earth, a very peculiar People. All others run after Idols, all others blindly adore a monſtrous Multitude of vicious and deſpicable Deities; but that People, whom we call *Jews*, worſhip but one ſingle God, Creator of Heaven and Earth: A *Jew* by the Law, to which his whole Worſhip is referable, is obliged to love God with all his Heart, all his Soul, all his Thought, and with all his Might. That circumciſed People have in their Law a Circumciſion of the Heart enjoin'd them, of which the Circumciſion of the Body is but a Figure; and that Circum-

ciſion of the Heart, is the Separation of all Affection, which doth not proceed from the Principle of the Love of God. If I could find upon Earth any other Race of Men, whoſe Worſhip was likewiſe to love God, and who made Virtue conſiſt in preferring God to themſelves; I would compare that Religion with this of the *Jews*, to examine which was the pureſt and moſt worthy of being follow'd: But on the one Hand I find, that this God, who owes all Things to himſelf, could not create Man for any other End, but to pay him a publick Worſhip of Love and Obedience; on the other Hand, I meet with this Worſhip among no other Nation beſides the *Jews*: The *Pagans* have fear'd their falſe Gods, they were deſirous of appeaſing them, they offer'd them the Fat and Blood of Beaſts, Incenſe in their Temples, and other coarſe Gifts; but they never gave them their Hearts. they never ſo much as thought of loving them, and much leſs to value them above their own ſelves, or to love their own ſelves only for the ſake of their Gods. And indeed, they did not take any of them to have been their Creator; *Jupiter* himſelf, though ſuppoſed much Superior in Power to all other

Deities,

Deities, was not eſteem'd to have drawn Beings out of nothing; only according to them, he had found a Matter more ancient than himſelf, that had exiſted from all Eternity, and which he had ſhaped by bringing the Chaos into order.

As to the Philoſophers, they valued Reaſon, Juſtice, Virtue and Truth only, for the ſake of their intrinſick Worth. They believed, that the Gods gave Health, Wealth and Glory, but they pretended to owe Virtue and Wiſdom, which diſtinguiſh'd them from the reſt of Men, to none but themſelves, of which they had the Source in themſelves. They never did unravel either the Bounty of the Creation, the Power of the Creator, or the Love we owe him, of valuing him above ourſelves. So that in looking over all the Nations of the Earth in paſt Times, I can find none but the *Jews*, that ador'd the true God, and were acquainted with the Worſhip of Loving him.

But that Love was rather Figurative than Practical with them: It is rather promis'd there for times to follow, than actually reigning in their Hearts. I perceive in the midſt of that Nation a certain Number of Righteous fill'd with

that Worſhip of Love; but the greateſt Part only buſied with Ceremonies, the Sacrificing of Beaſts, and an external Worſhip, to obtain of God Peace, Health, Liberty, the Dew from Heaven, and the Fat of the Earth. All expect a Meſſiah promis'd to them, and figuratively expreſſed in their Myſteries: But ſome, inconſiderable as to their Numbers, expect him as one, who will purify their Morals; renew the Heart of Man; heal the Wounds which Sin has made; ſpread the Knowledge and the Love of God, and give the Face of the Earth a new Aſpect: The reſt, who make up the Multitude, expecting nothing but an earthly, conquering, a proſperous and invincible Meſſiah, who will flatter their Pride, reign over all the Nations, and heap on the *Jews* all temporal Bleſſings.

Both agree that their Religion is yet but a Type of what it is to be under the Reign of that Meſſiah; all agree that, according to thoſe Scriptures which they ſay are *inſpired by God*, That Meſſiah is to bring all the Idolaters and Gentiles to the Worſhip of the true God. Without embracing all the Subtleties of their Rabbins in the explaining this Paſſage of the Scriptures, it is evident both by this

ſame

ſame Text, and the Meaning of it, which they all agree in, That the Meſſiah is to eſtabliſh every where the true Worſhip of Love, and utterly aboliſh Idolatry.

I am loath to enter into all the myſterious Subtleties of thoſe *Jewiſh* Doctors, it is ſufficient for me to ſee in groſs, two Things in my Opinion palpable: The one is, That all the Periods of Time, which the *Jews* have from Time to Time fixed as the true Seaſon for the Coming of the Meſſiah, are all and every one of them paſs'd; That now they will not conſent, that a fixed Term ſhould be aſſign'd; That they no longer know what to adhere to, as if they had loſt their Way; That after ſo long a Wandering over the Earth, all their Tribes are confounded and mix'd; That they have not ſo much as any Tokens left by which to know their Meſſiah, in Caſe he ſhould now come; That for more than Sixteen Hundred Years paſt they have carried all the Marks of the Curſe foretold them in their own Books, and which will remain upon them to the laſt, for having not known *Him*, ſent by God.

The other Thing I obſerve is, That *Jeſus Chriſt* doth bear the Signs of the

True Meſſiah: He has drawn the *Gentiles* to him according to the Promiſes. Of ſo many different barbarous and idolatrous Nations he has made one ſingle People, who has deſtroy'd the Idols, adore the true God Creator, renders him the true Worſhip of Love, and is united in that Worſhip from one End of the World to the other. All *Europe* is fill'd with Chriſtians. There are but few Kingdoms in *Aſia*, even beyond the *Eaſt-Indies*, where you may not find ſome: They have penetrated far beyond all the Countries, which made up the World known to the antient *Jews*, *Greeks*, and *Romans*: Some there are in all theſe Countries of *Africa* whoſe Ports are ſhut: All the vaſt Continent of *America*, call'd the *New World*, is govern'd by them. So that from the Riſing to the Setting Sun in the two Hemiſpheres JESUS is offer'd to God as a pure and ſpotleſs Victim, deſign'd to expiate the Sins of the World. All unite themſelves to him to make up with him but one Victim of Love; and all who ſin, beat their Breaſts to obtain through him that Mercy which they ſtand in need of.

Let us ſet aſide all Diſputes about the Detail, ſince the whole is ſufficient to decide

decide of all. What is evident without any Debate is, That there is on Earth none beſides the *Jews* and the *Chriſtians*, who ſhow me that Worſhip of Love, which I ſeek every where to embrace: I am obliged to fix my ſelf for the Practice of it with one of thoſe two. And between them two I cannot ſeriouſly go about to make a Parallel. Though the one and the other partake of Imperfections inſeparable from Human Nature; yet has the Chriſtian ſuch Lineaments of Perfection as are infinitely above all that the *Jews* can boaſt of. The *Jews* themſelves forewarn me by their Law, their Ceremonies, Promiſes, all the Circumſtances of their Condition, That they poſſeſs the true Religion but figuratively; That they are themſelves only like thoſe Plaiſter Moulds made to caſt a Marble or Brazen Statue in. I find in the Chriſtian People, compos'd out of all the Nations of the known World, the People who was to, and doth inherit the Promiſes, inoculated on the Stem of *Abraham's* Race; it is the adopted People, that compoſes but one Body and but one uninterrupted Succeſſion ſince the Patriarchs to our own Times: This way I find what I wanted, that is, that Wor-

ſhip of Love, which ought to be as ancient as the World, and for whoſe ſake the World it ſelf has been made: I can ſee it diſtinctly noted in all Ages; it receiv'd Birth in the Garden of *Eden*; was not extinguiſh'd by the Sin of *Adam*; Part of his Poſterity preſerved it; it was renewed after the Deluge; *Abraham* removed it into a particular Region; *Moſes* made it more illuſtrious with his Ceremonies; the Saints of the Old Covenant practis'd it, and foretell its Perfection; whoſe Accompliſhment is reſerv'd for the Meſſiah! JESUS comes to make us familiar with God, and to teach us the ſelf-denying and unmercenary True Worſhip; he comes to teach us, not to live in the midſt of dainty Pleaſures and worldly Honour, not to butcher Beaſts and burn Incenſe to God to draw thereby Terreſtrial Bleſſings on our ſelves, as the *Jews* fancied; but to deny our ſelves, to love our ſelves only in Him, for Him, and with His Love. Maugre the Infirmities of Human Nature, a great Number is ſeen, whom that pure Religion poſſeſſes and animates: That Love of the true God creates in them all the Virtues oppoſite to Self-Love.

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This is undoubtedly the Worſhip I was looking for. It was with the *Jews* but figuratively: Nothing of it was to be found there but its Seed, a ſmall Bud and a Shadow of it: The Perfection of it is no where but in that New People which is united to that Old one: It is with them I perceive with the firſt Caſt of mine Eye, That Adoration in Spirit and in Truth; In a Word, That Love, which alone is the whole Law and the Prophets.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Chriſtian Religion.

WHAT ſeems to me the diſtinguiſhing Character of the true Worſhip, is not to fear God in the manner as we fear a mighty and terrible Man, who cruſhes every one that dares reſiſt

him. The Heathens offer'd Incenſe and Victims to ſome peculiar Deities whom they conceiv'd miſchievous and frightful, in Order to appeaſe them. This is not the Idea I ought to have of God my Creator; He is infinitely juſt and Almighty; he deſerves indeed to be fear'd, but he is frightful only to thoſe who refuſe to love him, and to make themſelves acquainted with him. The moſt reaſonable Fear we ought to be in about him, is that of diſpleaſing him, and of not doing his Will. As to the Fear of his Puniſhments, it is uſeful to Men out of the right Road, becauſe it counterpoizes their Paſſions, and helps to reſtrain their Vices: But, in ſhort, his Fear is only ſo far uſeful as it removes the Obſtacles, and by removing thoſe diſpoſes Men to Love. There is no Man upon Earth that would covet to be fear'd of his Children without being loved by them at the ſame Time; the bare Fear of Puniſhments will never ſway a free and generous Soul. When a Man practiſes Virtue from the only Motive of that Fear, without having any Love for true Virtue, he only practiſes it to avoid Sufferings; conſequently, if he could avoid Puniſhment when he diſpenſes with the Practice

ſtice of Virtue, he certainly would not practiſe them. Not only, there is no Parent who cares to be honour'd thus, nor a Friend who will ſtyle ſuch his Friends as were tyed by no other Bonds: But there is not a Maſter, who would either reward Servants, or have a Kindneſs for them, or chuſe them for his Servants, if he found them attach'd to him by no other Motive than Fear, without any Sentiments of Love and Good-will: With much more Reaſon ought we to believe, that God, who has made us capable of Underſtanding, and of Love, for no other End than that of being known and loved by us, is not ſatisfied with a ſlaviſh Fear, but wills, that Love, which flows from him as from its Spring, ſhould return to him as its End. I even conceive, That it is not ſufficient to love God in the ſame manner we love all Things that are convenient and uſeful to us: The End is not to put it out to our own Advantage and Satisfaction; on the contrary we ought to deliver up our ſelves intirely to him, willing our own Good and Advantage but in as much as it redounds to his Glory, and is conformable to His Will and to the Order He has eſtabliſhed in the Univerſe.

OBSERVATION.

The latter End of this Chapter, is the true Quietism *for which the Author was cenſur'd, and indeed Deſervedly: For the Creator of Man, knew his Creature too well, to expect ſuch a refin'd and diſintereſted Love from him; and therefore has conſtantly accompanied his Commandments in the Old and New Teſtament with Promiſes, and threaten'd the Diſobedient with Puniſhments both in This and the Next World.*

LETTER IV.

Upon the Idea of an Infinite Being, and of THE LIBERTY GOD WAS AT, *of* Creating, *or of* not Creating *the* WORLD.

SIR,

THough neither of us have yet the Opportunity of ſeeing and knowing each other, I cannot help entertaining a good Opinion of your Merit from the Letter you have favour'd me with. I ſhould be extreamly pleas'd if I could make ſuch an Anſwer thereunto as would come

come up to your Expectation; but I ſcarce dare hope for it, from the Difficulty of the Matter in Queſtion, and the little Leiſure I can ſpare for it. Before I enter upon the Subject you propoſe, I deſire you would give me Leave to explain my general Thoughts on Philoſophy, which may not be altogether uſeleſs to ſet the propos'd Queſtions in a better Light.

I begin immediately, Sir, with ſtopping ſhort in a Philoſophical Debate, as ſoon as I meet with a Point of Faith that contradicts ſome Philoſophical Thought which I am tempted to approve.

Without heſitating in the leaſt, I prefer God's Reaſon to My Own, and the beſt Uſe which I can make of my ſmall Underſtanding, is to give it up to his Authority. So that without hearkening to my ſelf, I only give Ear to that Revelation which the Church hands down to me, and I deny all that the Church bids me diſown. If all the Mathematicians in the World did unanimouſly agree in a particular Demonſtration of Mathematicks, and in their Account of it to a Man of Senſe, but ignorant in that Science to a Degree, as not to be even capable of underſtanding that Demonſtration; yet

yet ought he to be deem'd a prudent Man for believing them upon their unanimous Aſſertion: The beſt Uſe he could make of his unlearned Reaſon would be to ſubmit it to the ſuperior and better inform'd Judgments of ſo many Learned Men. Ought I not much more to ſubmit my limited Reaſon to the infinite Reaſon of God? Aſſoon as I conceive it thus, I am prepared to find infinitely more in him than what I am able to conceive. Thus in Matters of Religion, I believe without Reaſoning like a weak Woman; and I know no other Reaſon than the Authority of the Church, which tenders me Revelation. What diſpoſes me more to this Docility, is the repeated Occaſions I have to believe firmly without any Diſtruſt ſuch Truths as are abſolutely incomprehenſible to me. For Example, Whatever Side I turn my ſelf to, endeavouring to believe, the Diviſibility of contiguous or continued Subſtances *ad infinitum*, or to believe Atoms, I find my ſelf utterly incapable to make any intelligible Anſwer to the Objections, and I find my ſelf under a Neceſſity of believing what I do not underſtand, and is beyond me. And if I continually experience this in Things purely natural,

and

and in Regard to the moſt deſpicable Atoms, with how much more Reaſon ought I to admit ſupernatural Truths, of which I am inform'd by Divine Revelation, though my feeble Reaſon cannot explain them to me? We are at every Step, even in Philoſophical Enquiries, oblig'd to admit without any Scruple what is above Reaſon it ſelf, otherwiſe we ſhould believe nothing at all that is about and moſt familiar to us. Doth a blind Man refuſe his Belief to a ſeeing Man who affirms to him, that there is Light and Variety of Colours, becauſe he can form no Idea of either? Ought I not to think my ſelf as blind in Reſpect to the ſupernatural Truths, as a blind Man is in Reſpect to Light and Colours? Ought I not to be as docile to the Authority of God, as a blind Man is every Day to that of clear-ſighted Men? Hence I conclude, That ſome People may pretend, they cannot conceive a Propoſition, and that their Reaſon ſeems evidently repugnant to it; or elſe that a certain Propoſition ſeems evident to them, and that they are not at Liberty to deny their Conſent to it, I do deny and affirm, without the leaſt Heſitation, whatever Religion propoſes to me as an Object of my Belief

Belief or Diſ-belief. I even go farther, I believe all Propoſitions to which my Reaſon leads me, tho' when I am arrived to 'em, I cannot afterwards, by the Strength of my Reaſon, vanquiſh thoſe Objections, which I am tempted to hold for demonſtrative Arguments againſt thoſe very Propoſitions which I have embraced. After having declared to you, how docile I am to Religious Authority, I think my ſelf obliged to let you know how indocile I am to any Philoſophical Authority. Some are for making *Ariſtotle* the Prince of Philoſophers; I appeal to Reaſon, which is the Judge between *Ariſtotle* and all other Men. Others adjudge the Precedency to *Deſcartes*; but I ſhall anſwer them, that I learned from *Deſcartes* himſelf, not to believe any Body upon a bare Aſſertion. Philoſophy being nothing elſe but Reaſon, Men ought not therein to follow any other Guide than Reaſon. Would you have me believe any Propoſition in Matters of Philoſophy; let us lay aſide all great Names, and look into the Nature of the Arguments. Give me clear and diſtinct Ideas, and not Quotations from Authors liable to Miſtakes. If Authority has any Weight in Philoſophical Matters,

Matters, it is only to engage us from the Esteem, for certain Philosophers to examine their Opinions more attentively. *Descartes*, who durst shake off the Yoke of all Authority to follow only his own Ideas, ought himself to claim no Authority over us. If I was to believe any Philosopher, barely on Account of his Reputation, I would much rather believe *Plato* and *Aristotle*, who for so many Ages were in Possession of deciding all Questions: I would even rather believe St. *Austin*, than *Descartes*, in Matters merely Philosophical; for besides that, he knew much better how to reconcile them with Religion: We find moreover in that Father, a much more extended Genius concerning all Metaphysical Truths, though he never treated of them, but occasionally, and without Method. If a Man of Learning and Judgment was to put together all the sublime Truths which St. *Austin* has scattered throughout his Works, as by mere Chance; That Abstract, carefully made, would be much superior to the so much cry'd up *Meditations* of *Descartes*, though they really were the greatest Production that Philosopher was capable of.

I own

I own to you, Sir, There are ſome things in *Deſcartes*, which to me ſeem little worthy of him; as, for Example, his Indefinite World, which is nothing but a ridiculous Conception, unleſs it means a Real Infinite Subſtance. His Proof, of the Impoſſibility of a *Vacuum*, is a mere *Paralogiſmus*, wherein he has follow'd his own Fancy, inſtead of following Ideas purely intellectual.

There are many other Subjects wherein he has not attained to the niceſt and ſtricteſt Point of Exactneſs; I ſpeak it ſo much more freely, becauſe I am rather otherwiſe prepoſſeſſed in Favour of, and have a high Eſteem for the Genius of that Philoſopher. I know there are Abundance of ingenious Men, who call themſelves *Carteſians*, and in my Opinion, have embraced ſome too bold Opinions, grounding themſelves on *Deſcartes*'s *Principia*: But without criticiſing or naming any Body, I freely let every Man reaſon as much as Religion permits, and I take my ſelf the Liberty I grant to Others, miſtruſting however my own weak Knowledge moſt ſincerely. I own, it ſeems to me, That ſeveral Philoſophers of our own time, otherwiſe very eſteemable, have not been exact enough in what

what they have ſaid upon your Two Queries; the one, Of the Nature of the Infinite Being; the other, Of God's Liberty in Relation to his External Works. Let us now, Sir, if you pleaſe, come to the Examination of Them.

QUERY I.

Of the Nature of the Infinite Being.

I Can conceive but one Infinite Being, that is, none but the Infinitely perfect Being, or Infinite in every Kind. Whatever Infinite, was Infinite only in one Kind, could not be taken for a true Infinite. Whoever ſays one Kind, or one Specie, doth manifeſtly imply a Limit, and the Excluſion of all and every ulterior Reality; in which conſiſts the very Nature of a finite or limited Being. That Man has not ſtudied to the utmoſt Point of Nicety the Idea of the Infinite, who has circumſcrib'd and inclos'd it within the

the Limits of a Kind. It is viſible, that it cannot be found but in the Univerſality of that Being, which is the Being infinitely perfect in every kind, and infinitely ſimple; that is, free of all Compoſition.

If it was poſſible to conceive Infinite Subſtances, limited to certain particular Kinds, it might be truly ſaid, That the being infinitely perfect in all Kinds, is infinitely greater than thoſe Infinites; for beſides that it wou'd equal every one of thoſe Infinites in their ſeveral Kinds, and wou'd ſurpaſs each of them, by being equal to them altogether; it wou'd moreover have a ſupream Simplicity (Uncompoundedneſs) which wou'd render it infinitely more perfect than that whole Collection of pretended Infinites.

Beſides, each of thoſe ſubaltern Infinites wou'd be limited exactly, where its own kind was limited; and thereby make it unequal to that Being, which is infinite in every kind.

Whoever ſays an Inequality between two Beings, doth neceſſarily indicate, a particular Place, where the one doth terminate, and the other doth not end; ſo that it is a Contradiction to admit two unequal infinite Beings.

I can

I can even comprehend but One, ſince one only by its real Infinity, excludes all Limit in all kind, and fills it ſelf the whole Idea of an infinite Being: Beſides, as I have already obſerv'd, No Infinite that was not ſimple, cou'd truly be ſtiled an Infinite: The want of Unity is an Imperfection; for between two Perfections, otherways equal, it is more perfect to be entirely one, than to be compound; that is, than to be but a Collection of particular Beings. And it muſt be own'd, that to be limited is an Imperfection; therefore ſuch an Imperfection of Diviſibility is oppoſite to the Nature of the true Infinite, which has no Limits. It may be thought perhaps, that this is but a vain Subtlety; but if Men will but ſincerely miſtruſt and lay aſide certain Prejudices, they will eaſily be made ſenſible, That a compound Infinite, Is infinite only by Name; and that it is actually and really limited by the Imperfection of all diviſible Beings, and can only be reduc'd to the Unity of a particular kind. This will be more evident, by making ſome very ſimple and very natural Suppoſitions concerning thoſe pretended Infinites, in reality no more than compound Beings.

Give

Give me a diviſible Infinite; it muſt needs have an infinite Number of Parts actually diſtinct from each other: Take away from it a Parcel as ſmall as you pleaſe; as ſoon as it is taken off, I ask you, Whether that which remains is ſtill an infinite Subſtance or not? If it be not infinite, I maintain, That the Total before the Removal of that ſmall Parcel was not a true infinite Being: See here the Proof of it; No compound Finite, to which you had re-join'd a very ſmall Parcel, firſt taken from it, cou'd become an Infinite by that Re-union; therefore it wou'd remain Finite after the Re-union: Conſequently it was a truly finite Being before the Separation of that Parcel. And indeed, What can be more ridiculous, than to dare ſay, That *the ſame whole, all, is ſometimes finite, and ſometimes infinite*, according as you either remove from, or rejoin a Sort of an Atom to it? What! Do the Infinite and the Finite differ only for having that Atom more or leſs?

If on the contrary, that whole remains infinite, after you have cut a ſmall Parcel from it, we muſt own, That there are Infinites unequal to each other; for it is manifeſt, That this whole was bigger

ger before, than ſince the Removal of that Parcel. It is clearer than the Sun, That the Removing of a Part cauſes a leſſening of the whole, in Proportion to the Bigneſs of that Part. Now it is a compleat Abſurdity, to affirm, That the ſame Infinite, continuing always infinite, is ſometimes bigger, and ſometimes leſs.

The Side from which you cut off a Parcel, is viſibly ended, or limited where the Parcel was cut off. The Infinite is no longer an Infinite on that Side, ſince it there finds a remarkable End: That Infinite is therefore imaginary; and never can a diviſible Being prove a real Infinite. Men having the Idea of the Infinite, have apply'd it in a very improper Manner, and contrary to the true Idea of it to all theſe Beings, which they would give no Limits to in their Kind; but they have not obſerv'd, That every Kind is in itſelf a Limit, and that all Diviſibility being an Imperfection, which is likewiſe a viſible Limit, doth exclude the true Infinite, which is a Being without Limits in Perfection.

Being, Unity, Truth and Goodneſs, are the ſame Things; ſo that whatever is an infinite Being, is infinitely one, infinitely

finitely True, Infinitely Good. Conſequently it is Infinitely Perfect and Indiviſible.

Thence I conclude, That nothing is greater Contradiction than an Imperfect Infinite, and conſequently a Limited One: Nothing more abſurd than an Infinite which is not infinitely One: Nothing more inconceivable than an Infinite Diviſible, in ſeveral Parcels, whether you call them Finite or Infinite. Thoſe Chimerical Infinite Subſtances may be imagin'd by ſome groſs and unthinking People, but never clearly conceiv'd. It is even impoſſible there ſhould be two Infinites, for both put together muſt infallibly be bigger than each of them ſeparately, and conſequently neither the one nor the other could be a true Infinite. Beſides, the Collection of thoſe two Infinites would be Diviſible and conſequently Imperfect, whereas each of them would be Indiviſible and Perfect in themſelves; ſo that one ſingle Infinite would prove more perfect than the two together. If on the contrary we did ſuppoſe, that the two join'd together would be more perfect than each of them ſeparately, it would follow, That dividing would be degrading of them.

I Conclude therefore, That it is impoſſible to conceive more than one Infinite, ſtrictly one, True and Perfect.

QUERY II.

Upon God's Liberty of Creating, or not Creating the WORLD.

UNdoubtedly, Sir, you judged rightly, That when I ſaid it was a greater Perfection in a Being to be fruitful than not to be ſo, I did not deſign to deſcribe an actual Production but a Virtue or Power to produce out of itſelf: Thus is it daily ſaid, That a Land is very fruitful, though it lie really fallow, becauſe it is capable of producing the moſt plentiful Crops. It may perhaps be objected, That the *Act* is a greater Perfection than the *Power*, and that it is a greater Perfection actually to operate, than to have only the Power of operating: But this Reaſoning is fallacious and to put

it

it in a true Light, I desire you will consider the following Positions.

It is true that in the School Language, *The Act Perfects the Power, and is the Fullness of it.* But see here all that is real in that Assertion.

1*st*, Philosophers speak of the Act as of a Being distinct from Power and Action, and which is the End and Limit of Action itself. In that Sense, the End is the Fullness which perfects the Power. No *Cartesian* can affirm this seriously.

2*dly*, Whoever says pure Power or mere Power, means a simple Capacity of Existing; on the contrary, Act implies an Existence, and a Perfection already existing and actual. In a word, That which is only *in Posse* is but possible, and what is already in Act doth exist actually already. And is it not manifest, That it is a greater Perfection to be actually Existing, than to be only *in posse* or possible?

Pray observe, That the same Being may at the same time be in Power for some peculiar things, and in Act for some others. It is what daily happens to all finite and created Beings; for on one Hand it is already in Act for whatever it has already received of Existence an

Action; but on the other hand it is only *in poſſe*, for every thing it is yet to receive, and of which by its preſent Exiſtence it has only the bare Power or Capacity ro receive it.

In this Senſe it is again manifeſt, That it is a greater Perfection to be IN ACT, than only *in poſſe*. But all this has no manner of Relation to the Power and the Act of particular Actions, which Men are free to do, or not to do; and which ſometimes they are in the right to leave undone. For Example; I am not more perfect when I ſpeak than when I do not ſpeak; it even happens often that I am more perfect in being ſilent than in ſpeaking.

The Perfection conſiſts in the Power of doing that Action, to which I make no Addition by doing it; otherwiſe I ſhould be blameable for not giving my ſelf a Perfection which was in my Power, as often as I remain ſilent out of Prudence.

It is true, that the Soul is always in Action; it always at leaſt confuſedly knows ſome Truth or other, and in Proportion wills ſome good Action, but it is not neceſſitated to do any one particular Action before another.

It

It is not true, according to the foremention'd Example, That the Action of ſpeaking is in itſelf more perfect than the ſimple Power of doing it.

If it is no greater Perfection in Man actually to perform ſuch a thing than ſimply to have the Power to perform it, This is yet more evidently plain in God; we muſt at leaſt own, That every Operation of the Creature is a Modification of its own conferring. It is true likewiſe That it always operates, and conſequently always modifies itſelf, ſometimes one way, ſometimes another; but when it chuſes, the beſt Operation that it gives itſelf by that Choice, is the moſt perfect Modification. It is not ſo with God. By his Infinite, Uncompounded and Immutable Being he is incapable of all Modifications; for a Modification would be a Limit; His Operation is nothing but himſelf, without adding any thing to it. If his Operation did add any thing to his Perfection, he would not be God; for it would follow, That he would not have of himſelf Infinite Perfection independently of his Action out of himſelf.

In that Caſe his Operation without would be eſſential to his Godhead, and make part of it. Moreover, His out-

ward Work, which is no more than his Creature, if it could not be ſeparated from his fruitful Operation; that Work, I ſay, would be eſſential to his Infinite Perfection, and conſequently to his Godhead: We ſhould not be able to conceive the one without the other; the one would not depend upon the other. The Creature would be eſſential to the Creator and be confounded and mix'd with him. The Infinite Perfection could not be found but in that Total of God operating without, and in his Work. The Creature being neceſſary to the Creator himſelf, from his Eſſence, would ceaſe to be a Creature. We ſhould be oblig'd to place it in the ſame Rank with the Perſons of the holy Trinity and together with the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, make a Fourth Perſon of it. In that Caſe God ſhould be neceſſitated eternally to produce whatever he was capable to produce moſt perfectly. He ſhould himſelf be that Production: He ſhould be no longer God, than as he was actually doing it. He never could be at Liberty not to do it, if we did not conceive him to have Exiſtence, at leaſt one Moment before he began to produce. We ſhould be oblig'd to ſay, That when he began

to

to produce, that then he began to make himſelf perfect, and to become God. In a Word, The Creature ſhould be ſo eſſential to the Creator, that it would be impoſſible to make any real Diſtinction betwixt them; and Men would be accuſtomed not to ſeek for any other infinitely perfect Being, but that whole collective Body of Beings, called *Creatures*.

What ſhall we do then not to fall into that monſtrous Impiety? We muſt ſay, That God is not more perfect, when he doth operate out of himſelf than when he doth not operate; becauſe he is always Almighty and infinitely fruitful; even when he is not pleas'd to exerciſe that fruitful Power.

Thereby we know that God is free with a Supream Liberty, of which ours is but a feeble Reſemblance, and a ſmall Share.

Thereby we know the Gratitude which is due to the intirely free Gift of the Creation. Thereby we enter into the true Spirit and Meaning of the holy Scripture, which tells us, That God finiſh'd his Work in ſeven Days: He did not do it at one ſimple Act, he did break off in the midſt of it; by little and little, and different Degrees, did he bring his

Work to his propos'd End: He gave it every Day a new and particular Form, and in different Tasks he gave it an Increaſe of Perfection. Every thing was each Day found good and worthy of him, yet he made it ſtill better afterwards, and more finiſh'd. Thereby he ſhewed how much he was the Maſter of his whole Work, ſo as to give as much and as little Perfection as he ſhould think fit. He might have ſtopp'd his Hand after the Production of a ſhapeleſs heap of Matter, and he was free to make out of that Maſs the Work full of Variety and Ornaments, which it pleas'd him to make, and is call'd *The Univerſe.*

Nothing therefore is more falſe than what I hear ſome People ſay, to wit, That the Order of Things, which is himſelf, doth neceſſitate God to produce every thing which he was able to form, moſt perfect. This reaſoning tends to prove, that the actual Production of God is eternal, and eſſential to the Creator. This reaſoning would prove, That God could not with-hold himſelf in any thing when he Created the World, That he was no ways free to do it, but was forced to make it all at once, and even to produce it from all Eternity. It would thence

thence follow, That God was as much conſtrain'd as to the manner of acting as to the very bottom of his Work. According to that Principle it was neceſſary upon Pain of violating Order, and degrading himſelf, That he ſhould produce his Work, and perfect it in the ſimpleſt manner. In a Word, If this Principle holds true, God's Omnipotence was exhauſted in a Moment. He cannot henceforth produce one ſimple Atom more; he is abſolutely incapable of adding the leaſt Degree of Perfection to the meaneſt Atom in the Univerſe. If any thing is unworthy of God, it is ſuch an Idea of him.

How much more noble and juſtly doth St. *Auſtin* think about the Godhead? That Father imagines to himſelf Degrees of Perfection, either infinitely aſcending or deſcending, which God beholds at one ſingle View. He ſees none, that doth not remain infinitely below his own infinite Perfection. He may riſe as high as he pleaſes in finiſhing the Plan of his Work, his Work muſt always remain infinitely below him. He may deſcend as low as he pleaſes, his Work muſt always be good, perfect, according to its Meaſure, diſtinct from Nothingneſs, and worthy of the infinite Being. God chu-

ſing betwixt all thoſe infinite Degrees of Perfection, doth call or not call Nothingneſs to become a Being, is bound to Nothing, and calls all things. His infinite Superiority above his Work, makes, that he can have no manner of Occaſion for it: The very Glory, which he draws from it, is, as it were, ſo accidental, That it is within his own Pleaſure, and the pure Choice of his Will.

He has been at Liberty to Create the World as ſoon and as late as he has thought fit; but the ſooneſt comes only after his Eternity, and the lateſt is ſtill follow'd by that ſame Eternity, which remains entire and undivided.

In a word, Whatſoever Extent he had given to the Duration of the Univerſe, it ſtill would have been ſomething Finite in the Infinite; it would have been comprehended and incloſed in the indiviſible Eternity of his Author.

St. *Auſtin* writing againſt the *Manichei*, repreſents that Goodneſs of the Work and that Liberty of the Workman, as intirely depending upon his Pleaſure in what degree to fix it. In all things, ſays that ancient Father, there is nothing but the different Degrees of Exiſtence, becauſe *to Be*, and *to be perfect*, is the very ſame thing.

It

It is by thoſe different Degrees that God diverſifies his Work: all that exiſts is good and perfect in a certain Kind. That which *is leſs* is leſs perfect; That which *is more* is more perfect; but whatſoever *is*, in whatſoever low Degree it *be*, is worthy of God, becauſe it has a *Being*, and there is occaſion for an Almighty Wiſdom to draw it out of Nothingneſs. At the ſame time every created Being, howſoever perfect we conceive it, has but a limited Degree of Exiſtence, to which it could not riſe but by the Almighty Wiſdom of him, who drew it out of Nothing. Every Creature therefore finds itſelf in that middle Poſition, between thoſe two Extremes in the Infinity of God himſelf.

God ſees nothing that is not infinitely below himſelf. That *infinite Inferiority* of all Created Beings, of the higheſt and the loweſt Degrees, puts them all in *a ſort of Equality* before his Eyes. Not one of them has that Superiority of Infinite Perfection as to prove to God an invincible Argument why he ſhould prefer it to others. At which Degree of all he may ſtop, he always neceſſarily ſtops at ſuch a one that proves finite, and infinitely below himſelf. That infinite Inferiority is the reaſon why no poſſible Perfection

can have the Force of compelling him: and his *Infinite Superiority* over all poſſible Perfection, is the very conſtituent Reaſon of this *Liberty in chuſing*. See here, Sir, what I imagine to have learnt of St. *Auſtin*, about the Liberty of God in the Production of his Works without himſelf. I wiſh I was at Liberty to diſcourſe with you more amply on all theſe Subjects, and I ſhould with much Pleaſure receive whatever you ſhould be ſo kind to impart to me: for I do not queſtion but that you have deeply ſearch'd into them: But having under my Care a large Dioceſe upon the Frontiers, where the War does much increaſe our Troubles; enjoying but a weak State of Health; and being beſides much taken up with my Controverſial Writings concerning Grace, I cannot allow my ſelf the Leiſure I could wiſh for meditating on Metaphyſicks.

LETTER IV.

Concerning the TRUTH *of* RELIGION, *and its* PRACTICE.

SIR,

IN my Opinion you have three Things to do: First, To ſet in as true a Light as poſſible, the Fundamental Articles of Religion, if you ſhould entertain any doubt about thoſe, or ſhould feel in your ſelf a want of a lively and diſtinct Perſwaſion of them. Secondly, To examine your Conſcience upon your paſt Conduct. Thirdly,

Thirdly, To lay down to your ſelf the Plan of a Chriſtian-like Courſe of Life for the future.

I.

Nothing truly ſolid can be objected againſt the Truths of Religion. A great Number of them, and thoſe the moſt Fundamental, are conformable to Reaſon. They are rejected only through Pride, a petulant Looſeneſs of the Mind, the Luxuriancy of the Paſſions, and the Fear of ſubmitting to a Yoke too cumberſome: For Example; it is eaſy to perceive, That we have not made our ſelves: That we have begun to be what we were not an hundred Years ago. That our Bodies, whoſe Frame and Matter is full of Springs ſo aptly contriv'd, cannot but be the Work of a marvellous Induſtry and Power. That the Univerſe diſcovers in all its Parts, the Art of the ſupreme Maker who has form'd it. That our weak Reaſon is every Moment ſet right within us by another ſuperior Reaſon, which we conſult, and which rebukes us; which we cannot alter, becauſe it is unalterable; and which changes us, becauſe we have occaſion for it. All Men, in all Places, ask Advice of it.

It

It returns an Anſwer in *China*, as well as in *France* or *America*. It is not divided by communicating it ſelf. What it beſtows on me of its Rays, robs none of thoſe, who were already fill'd with it. It lends it ſelf out every Moment without Meaſure, and yet is never exhauſted. It is a Sun whoſe Light enlightens the Mind, as the viſible Sun does the Body. That Light is Eternal and Immeaſurable. It comprehends all Times, as well as all Places. It is not *my ſelf*, ſince it rebukes and corrects me, even contrary to my Inclination: Conſequently it is above me, and above all ſuch weak and imperfect Men as I am. That ſupreme Reaſon, which is the Rule of my own; That Wiſdom from which every wiſe Man receives what he has; That ſuperior Spring of Light whence we borrow all, is the very God we are looking for. He exiſts of himſelf, and we have no Being but through him. He has made us like unto himſelf; that is, reaſonable Creatures; that we might *know* him as the Infinite *Truth*, and *love* him as the Immenſe *Goodneſs*: That is, Religion; for Religion is Love. To love God, and make other Men love him, is the Practice of the moſt perfect Worſhip. God

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is our Father, we are his Children. The earthly Fathers are not ſuch Fathers as he, they are the Shadow of him. We owe him our Knowledge, Life, Being, and all that we are. Shall we, who abhor Ingratitude ſo much from Man to Man, on Account of the leaſt Obligations, Glory upon our monſtrous Ingratitude toward that Father, of whom we have received the Foundations of our Being? Shall we inceſſantly uſe the Gifts of his Love, to violate his Law, and to provoke him? Theſe are the Fundamental Truths of Religion, which Reaſon it ſelf points out and comprehends. Religion adds no more to our worldly Probity, but the Comfort, but the doing out of Love, and Gratitude, for our heavenly Father, what Reaſon it ſelf requires of us to do, for the Sake of Virtue.

It is true, That Religion propoſes ſome other Truths to us, which are call'd Myſteries, and are incomprehenſible: But ought we to be ſurpiz'd that Man, who knows neither the Springs of his own Body, which he uſes every Moment, nor the Thoughts of his Mind, which he cannot unravel to himſelf, ſhould not comprehend the Secrets of God?

God? Shall we wonder that the Finite cannot equal nor exhauſt the Infinite? We might ſay, That Religion would not bear the Character of the Infinite, out of whoſe Boſom it proceeds, if it ſurpaſs'd in nothing but our ſhort and feeble Underſtanding. It is worthy of God, and fitted to our Neceſſities, That our Reaſon ſhould be humbled and confounded by the over-bearing Authority of thoſe Myſteries we cannot penetrate into.

Beſides, Religion offers us nothing but what is conſonant to Reaſon, lovely, moving, worthy of Admiration, in all that relates to the Sentiments it inſpires us with, and the moral Virtues it requires of us. The only Point capable of making our Heart rebel, is the Obligation of Loving God more than our ſelves, and to refer us intirely to him. But what is more juſt, than to return all to him from whom we receive all; and to return that ſelf to him, which we hold from him only? What is more unjuſt, on the contrary, than to be ſo backward in embracing ſo juſt and ſo reaſonable an Opinion? We muſt be ſtrangely deviated, and of a corrupt Nature, to rebel againſt ſo legitimate a

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Sub-ordination. It is that blind, untam'd, insatiate and tyrannical Self-love, that covets all for it self, renders us idolatrous of our selves, which makes us desire to be the Centre of the whole World, and that God himself should serve no other turn than to flatter our vain Appetites. It is that which is the Antagonist of the Love of God. This is the deep Wound of our Heart. This is the great Principle of Irreligion. When will Man do himself Justice? When will he take his own due Place? When will he cease to love himself unreasonably, and but proportionably to what he is Love-worthy; and prefer to himself not only God, who bears no Comparison, but besides all publick Advantage to the Society of other Men, imperfect like himself; Once more, This is the Total of Religion, To know and to love God, *That is the whole Man*, as *Solomon* says. All the rest does not truly belong to Man: It is no more than Man of a depraved, corrupt Nature, degraded from himself; Man losing all because he would foolishly secure all to himself; and who goes a begging a false Happiness from the Creature, whilst he despises the true Happi-

ness

neſs which the Creator offers him. What is put in the Room of that infinite Good? Shameful Pleaſure, a Phantom of Honour; the Eſteem of thoſe very Men we deſpiſe.

When you ſhall have thus ſettled and rooted the Principles of Religion in your Heart, it will be needful to examine your Conſcience, to repair the Faults of your paſt Conduct.

II.

The firſt Step towards that Examination, is to put your ſelf in thoſe Diſpoſitions you owe to God. Have you a Mind to make a Man of Quality ſenſible, that he has committed Faults againſt his worldly Honour, in a Manner unworthy of his Birth? Begin with making him ſenſible of the noble and virtuous Sentiments, which Probity and Honour ought to inſpire him with; then will he have a moſt lively Senſe of the very leaſt Faults of that Kind he ſhall have committed; he will make moſt bitter Reproaches to himſelf about it, he will be aſhamed of it, and ſcarce admit of Comfort. That we may be ſorry for our Faults, we muſt have printed in our Hearts the Love

of

of thoſe Virtues, which are directly the Oppoſite of thoſe Faults. Will you exactly diſcern the Faults you have committed againſt God? Begin with loving him. It is the Love of God that will enlighten you, and give you a lively Sorrow of your Ingratitude to that infinite Goodneſs. Ask of a Man who knows not God, and is indifferent towards him, in what he has offended him, you will find him groſsly ignorant of his Faults: He neither knows what God requires, nor in what Particular we can be wanting to him. It is Love only which gives us a nice Diſcernment as to our Sins. Open your Eyes in a dark Place, you will perceive nothing in the Air; but open them near a Window to the Rays of the Sun, you will diſcover even the leaſt Atoms. Learn therefore to know the Goodneſs of God, and all that is due to him. Begin with loving him, and Love will perform that Search of your Conſcience, better than you can do it your ſelf. Love, and that Love will be inſtead of Memory to you, to make you tender, and at the ſame time comfortable Reproaches about every thing you ever did againſt that very Love. Behold a lively and ſincere Return of Friend-

Friendſhip between two People that had differ'd, nothing eſcapes their Notice of what had cauſed the Rupture and Diſunion of their Hearts. You will ask me, how any Body can give himſelf that Love which he does not feel, chiefly when it is concerning an unforeſeen Object that never fill'd our Fancy? I anſwer, Sir, That you daily love things you do not ſee. Do you ſee the Wiſdom of your Friend? Do you ſee his Sincerity, Courage, Diſintereſtedneſs, or his Virtue? No! You cannot ſee thoſe Objects with the Eyes of the Body, yet you eſteem them, and you love them, ſo as to prefer them in him to Riches, graceful Shape and Mein, and every thing that could greatly pleaſe the Eyes. Love God's Wiſdom and ſupreme Goodneſs, as you love the imperfect Wiſdom and Goodneſs of your Friend: If you cannot come up to the ſame Sort of Love which you feel to ſenſible Objects; at leaſt, let your Will deſire to prefer him to all other Beings, which is the very eſſential Point of this Love.

But this very Love is not in your Power, it does not depend upon your ſelf to give it you; you muſt deſire it, ask it, wait for it, endeavour to merit it,

it, and think it a Misfortune to be without it. With St. *Auſtin*, you muſt ſay to God with an humble Heart, *O antient, and yet always new Beauty, I have known thee and loved thee too late*! O! How many Years have I loſt? Whom have I lived for, ſince I did not live for thee? The leſs you feel of that Love, the more you ought to entreat God to kindle it in your Heart. Tell him, you deſire it with the ſame Eagerneſs, as a ſtarved Beggar prays for a Bit of Bread. O! How poor is my Heart! How it is reduced to Beggary! O thou, who art ſo lovely, and yet ſo little beloved, cauſe me to love thee, call back to its Centre my miſguided Love: Uſe me to be familiarly converſant with thee: Draw me wholly to thee, that I may form a cordial Friendſhip with thee, who art the only true Friend. O God! What have I not loved beſides thee! My Heart is worn out in the moſt vitious Paſſions. I am aſhamed of what I have loved; and am yet more aſhamed of what I have not loved. 'Till now my Food has been Naſtineſs and Poiſon: I have ſcornfully rejected the heavenly Bread; I have deſpis'd the Fountain of Living Waters; I have dug my ſelf muddy and unwholeſome Springs; I have fooliſhly fol-

followed Falſhood, and have ſhut mine Eyes to Truth; I would not ſee the Abyſs of Perdition juſt gaping in my Way. O my God! Thou haſt not forgot him who was unmindful of thee? Thou haſt loved me, though I did not love thee; and haſt had Compaſſion on my Errors. Thou ſeekeſt him who did ſhun thee. As ſoon as you ſhall be thus ſincerely moved, every Particular of that Self-Examination will become eaſy to you. The Shells, as it were, will at once drop from your Eyes: You will ſee through, with the piercing Eyes of Love, thoſe things which no other Eyes can diſtinguiſh; then you muſt ſtop a while inſteed of going on too faſt: 'Till then it would have been in vain to attempt haſtening you forewards; Self-Love would have kept you back, with a thouſand Thoughts unworthy the Worſhip of God.

As for the Detail of your Examination, it will not be difficult. Examine your ſelf in your ſeveral political and civil Employments, as you are the Lord of a Mannor, the General of an Army, Maſter of your Servants, and a Man of Diſtinction and Quality in the World: Then obſerve in what Points you have been

been wanting to Religion, by too bold Diſcourſes; to Charity, by ſpeaking things detrimental to your Neighbour; to Modeſty, by immodeſt Expreſſions; to Juſtice, by neglecting your Affairs, and not paying your Debts. Remember your groſs Paſſions, which perhaps have hurry'd you along; your Neighbour, to whom you have given a bad Example, and of the Scandal you have occaſioned. When a Man has for a long time lived up to his predominant Paſſions far from God, it is almoſt impoſſible to re-mind every particular Action; but without that Detail it is enough explained in a general Muſter, in accuſing one's ſelf of thoſe Vices, which have been habitual for the Courſe of ſo many Years.

III.

As to Futurity, it behoves you to regulate the Bottom of your Heart, to regulate your Conduct. Every one lives according to his Deſire. It is the Object of every one's Love, that determines and directs his Conduct. When you loved nothing but your ſelf, and your Pleaſure, you trampled upon God. Luxury is become your God. You urged on

on your Pleaſures even to Covetouſneſs, as St. *Paul* expreſſes himſelf; you were inſatiable of Senſualities as covetous Men are of Money; by deſiring to poſſeſs your ſelf independently from God, to enjoy every thing without Meaſure, you have loſt all; you have not truly poſſeſs'd your ſelf, but only deliver'd your ſelf up to the Tyranny of your Poſſeſſions, and have almoſt entirely deſtroy'd your ſelf. What a Frenzy of Self-love is this! Return then, return to God, he waits for you, he invites you, and extends his Arms to receive you: He loves you much more than you know how to love your ſelf. Conſult him in an humble manner, to know of him what it is he requires of you. Say to him what St. *Paul* ſaid to him, with ſo much Humility, at the inſtant of his Converſion, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*

When you are uſed to Prayer, then with a deliberate and pious *Advice*, make to your ſelf a Plan of an eaſy *and ſimple* Life, which you may be able to hold on, and which may put you out of Danger of Relapſes. Chuſe ſuch Company as may be an Indication of the Change work'd in your Heart. A true Friend of God can never chuſe to live with his

Enemies. The more he feels in his Heart a taſte of the Humour and Converſation of the Libertines, the more he will ſhun them, for fear of relapſing with them into Libertiniſm. The leaſt Man can give to God, is to feel his Frailty; to miſtruſt himſelf after ſo many fatal Experiments; It is to avoid that Danger, which he ought to think himſelf able to overcome. Make choice therefore of ſuch Companions with whom you may love God, become leſs fond of this World, and find your ſolid Comfort in Virtue. Avoid Grimaces and affecting to be ſingular: Let your Piety be Simple, entirely directed towards all the Duties of the Sphere you are in, and nouriſh'd with that Courage, Confidence, and Peace, which are the Fruits of a good Conſcience, and a ſincere Union with God.

Regulate your Expences, take all the Meaſures in your Power to make your Creditors eaſy; conſider what good you are able to do in the Place where you live; how much you can leſſen Irregularities and Abuſes, and ſtand by and ſupport Juſtice and Religion.

Chuſe ſuch Occupations in the interval of your Affairs as may be uſeful.

If

If you Read, chuſe uſeful Subjects; read Books of ſolid Piety to comfort your Heart, and good Hiſtorians to divert your ſelf innocently.

But what I requeſt of you above all, is to retire into your Cloſet, the firſt half quarter of an Hour, every Morning, and the laſt at Night to be in a hearty and familiar Converſation with your God. You ask me, how you ſhall be able to compoſe a Prayer; never fear, but if you are heartily in earneſt, you will make an excellent one. In what manner are you uſed to ſpeak to your Friends? Is half a quarter of an Hour's Converſation with a Friend tedious? God is that faithful Friend who is not tired with your Refuſals, whilſt all other Friends neglect you, becauſe you leave off to be a Partner of their Pleaſures. Tell him every Thing, hearken to him on all Accounts, re-enter often within your ſelf to find him there; *The Kingdom of God is within your ſelf*, ſays *Jeſus Chriſt*. We need not go far to fetch it, ſince it is ſo near to our ſelves. He will like any Thing; He deſires only your Heart, he wants no Compliments, nor your ſtudied or elegant Proteſtations pronounced with Heat or Paſſion. If your Imagination ſhould

wander and loſe it ſelf, return gently into the Preſence of God: Do not make your ſelf uneaſy; do not make of Prayer a Contention of the Mind; Do not look upon God as a Maſter who is not to be approach'd otherwiſe than with a formal Addreſs, and troubleſome Ceremony. That Liberty and Familiarity which proceeds from Love, will never leſſen true Reſpect and Obedience. Your Prayer will not be Perfect, till you be more familiarly converſant without Conſtraint with your true boſom Friend, than you are with all thoſe imperfect Friends of the World. You ask me what Penance you muſt do for your Sins; I anſwer you what *Jeſus Chriſt* did to the Adultereſs; *I will not condemn you, but take heed to ſin no more.* Your chief Penance ought to be patiently bearing Afflictions, to be Crucified with *Jeſus Chriſt*, to looſen your ſelf from the Bondage of this painful, miſerable, frail Life, and make a Sacrifice of it to God, if required, with an humble Courage. O the excellent Penance to hold one's ſelf under the Hand of God between Life and Death! Is it not repairing all the Faults of a paſt Life, to be patient under Sufferings, and ready to lay down a

Life,

Life, when it ſhall pleaſe God, of which you had made ſo ill a Uſe. Theſe *Sr*, are the chief Things which I would adviſe you to, I deſire you will receive them as the Marks of my being ſincerely

Yours, &c.

FINIS.

REMARKS OF THE TRANSLATOR,

By way of

APPENDIX.

THE Reputation of the Gelebrated Author of *Telemachus*, (which may be called an excellent mirrour of true Politicks) is eſtabliſh'd on ſo ſolid a Foundation as never to be ſhaken, and is like to be read as long as Societies ſhall ſubſiſt in the Weſtern and Northern Parts of the Globe.

Whatever has flow'd from his Pen and fertile

fertile Genius in Matters of Divinity or Philoſophy, (part of which has been communicated to the World during his Life, part ſince his Deceaſe by his learn'd Nephew the *Abbot de Fenelon*,) has met with ſo many Admirers abroad among the beſt Judges, that it would be a Loſs to *Engliſh* Readers to be any longer depriv'd of the Performances of ſo great a Maſter.

This Poſthumous Treatiſe, conſiſting of Five Letters on Subjects of the higheſt Nature and Concern, is ſo curiouſly wrought, and turns every Argument ſo much to the beſt Advantage, that although I do not admit of every thing therein laid down, I cannot but greatly commend and admire it. Both the Proteſtant and Catholick Reader will in a great meaſure find their Account in it. It ſeems as if the Author deſigned it for the Uſe of both, or at leaſt for thoſe called in *France* the *New Converts*: No Points of Controverſy being treated, but in ſuch a manner, as not to give Offence to either.

I.

The chief Inſtance on that Subject, upon which I have already made a pretty long Obſervation in the Body of the Book, and which requires an Addition, is,

where the Author treats of the *Power of Judging in Matters of Faith*, and againſt *true Proteſtants*; declares it not to be in every Chriſtian, but in what our *Author calls the* CHURCH; which in *his* Stile means the *General Aſſembly of the Clergy* in a *Council*, of which the *Gallican Church* owns the *Pope* to be no more than the *Mouth*. The Reaſons given by the Author, may, with equal Right, be employ'd by all eſtabliſh'd Religions and Churches all over the World; which may as legally claim a blind Submiſſion from the Illiterate: Even the *Turkiſh* Clergy, the *Chineſe* and *American* Prieſts may demand the ſame, and it is impoſſible to make any good Anſwers to their Pretenſions, if the Archbiſhop's Reaſons be valid. It is unjuſt to require the Illiterate amongſt them, that they ſhould miſtruſt their Leaders, and hearken to Chriſtian Miſſionaries, who may be Knaves and Seducers, for what they can know to the contrary; and conſequently, without freſh convincing Miracles, to convert their Clergy firſt, it will be not only vain, but unjuſt, to attempt the bringing thoſe Nations over to Chriſtianity.

II. As

II.

As our Author was noted for his Opinions concerning *Divine Love*, the Reader muſt not be ſurprized to meet many Paſſages inſiſting too much on that *Diſintereſtedneſs* of which Man is generally incapable, and which *the Goſpel doth not require*, ſince *Rewards and Puniſhments in the next World* are conſtantly propos'd as Motives to incite Men to Virtue, and deter them from Vice, *differing* in that Particular from the Law of *Moſes*, which ſeem'd to propoſe more *temporal Bleſſings* to its Obſervers. It was partly on the Account of this Doctrine, that our great Author ſuffer'd Perſecution, being baniſh'd and confin'd to his Dioceſe, and cenſur'd by *Rome*; though it is the general Opinion, That it was more on account of his *Telemachus* he ſuffer'd; *Lewis* the XIV. being told it was a Satire upon his Adminiſtration.

III.

Though the Author deſigns here only a Table of Contents, and barely to mention the Heads of his Arguments, ſo as to be apprehended, as he ſays, by *the moſt Illiterate*; yet in my Opinion he has not

only urged them in ſuch a manner as to make them Food only for grown Philoſophers, but has adorn'd them beſides with ſo many Rhetorical Figures, as if his Deſign had been *not to convince*, but to *ſurprize* and *over-reach* the *Underſtanding*, by moving the Paſſions; which is laudable or at leaſt pardonable in a Pulpit, but not excuſable, in a Letter to a great Man, whom he owns Maſter of the Subject.

IV.

The ſecond Letter contains Arguments to make out that God, *whoſe Exiſtence was prov'd at large in the firſt*, ought to be worſhipp'd: His *Pure Love* comes again upon the Stage; his Zeal for that Notion makes him not perceive that it is every way beyond the reach of the Illiterate, and will never make many Proſelites, although he could ſet the Truth of it in a very clear Light. He propoſed to treat his Subject ſo as to be underſtood by the Weakeſt, and yet reſtrain the bold Criticiſms of the Learned, to embrace the two Extreams of human kind; but he often forgets the firſt, and ſeems only to write for the ſagacious part of the World: but this is more

more to be imputed to the Nature of his Subject than to himſelf.

V.

Our Author ſeems to forget himſelf more, in that part of this ſecond Letter, where he is proving the *Immortality of the Soul*: For though it ſeems beyond diſpute, *That the Mortality or Annihilation of the Soul cannot be proved from Reaſon*, whether we allow it material or immaterial in a certain Senſe: It was incumbent on the Author himſelf to prove *from Reaſon, That the Soul is Immortal:* But inſtead of that, ſetting the Philoſopher aſide, he puts on the Chriſtian Divine, appeals from Reaſon to Scripture, whoſe Authority he knows is rejected by Unbelievers, and thoſe for whoſe Sake he writes. He ought in Prudence, to have wrote a Chapter on purpoſe to aſſert the Truth of that Revelation contained in the holy Scriptures, to which *he* ſubmits, becauſe *he* believes in them, and which he knew that *Heathens*, *Turks*, and *Atheiſts* wholly, and the *Jews* in part, do disbelieve. I cannot diſown but our Author endeavours at it occaſionally; But his arguments, which ought to be grounded on undeniable Facts, are on the contrary

built upon ſuch as are either diſputable or flatly denied by thoſe, who in them very Books have been called *The Guardians of the Oracles of God*, who deny the Senſe we *Chriſtians* put on moſt, if not all the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament. The Miracles, he mentions in general Terms, as Proofs of the Divinity of the Books of the New Teſtament, ſhould have been mention'd in part cular, and ſuch that no Body might have Reaſon to think them equally ſpurious with ſome, which are pretended to be done in latter times, or in our own Days: In ſhort, he ſhould not have contented himſelf with declaming in a pathetical Strain; *That the Books of the New Teſtament have changed the Face of the Earth, have peopled Deſarts with ſuch Solitaries as have been Angels in mortal Bodies, have cauſed the moſt arduous and amiable Virtues to flouriſh in the moſt impious and corrupt part of the World, and have perſuaded Man, Idolatrous of himſelf, to account himſelf for nothing, and only to love an inviſible Being.* To confute which I call upon all that have read Hiſtory, and are acquainted with the Methods uſed to propagate *Chriſtianity* in general, or what the ſtrongeſt ſide always call *Orthodoxy* in particular; eſpecially within theſe two laſt Centuries in South and North America.

merica. *Garcilaſſo de la Vega*, in his Hiſtory of *Peru*, who was a Convert to Chriſtianity, of the ſtanding of two Generations, and endeavours to put the beſt Conſtruction on moſt Actions of thoſe *Spaniards*, who by their Artifices and Cruelties ſubdued the Royal Yncas of *Peru*, ſaith enough to evince, *That the Covetouſneſs and Cruelty of the* Spaniards, *ſupported by the Engines and Arts of War, unknown to thoſe Nations, had a greater Share in converting thoſe Wretches to Chriſtanity than the New Teſtament, or any Miracles done to confirm the Contents thereof.* It was with them that the *Canon Law* was the beſt Argument, they being ſo much frighten'd and amazed at Fire-Arms, never ſeen nor heard of by them before, that they took the *Spaniards* for a new Sett of Children of the *Sun*, who ſhew'd their Origin by their Thunderbolts.

As to the Change in the Morals and Self-Love of Men, which he attributes to the Goſpel; I, again appeal to Hiſtory and Experience: let Travellers impartially relate what they know, and it will be evident, That the Morals of the *Turks*, *Chineſe*, and unconverted *Americans*, are every way as good, and in ſeveral Particulars better, than thoſe of Chriſtian Countries,

Countries, if you except thoſe Caſes where they are miſled by their Superſtitions and Idolatry. Do not Chriſtians excel in all the deſtructive and circumventing Arts of War and Peace? Who is more ingenious than they in Political Affairs? Where *Machiavel* always takes place of the *Goſpel*. What Nations have found it neceſſary to make ſo many Laws to preſerve Order in their Societies, and yet have ſo many more Ways to elude thoſe Laws than Chriſtian Nations?

As to the renouncing of Self-Love and the loving of God inſtead of it, I own it would be a Doctrine peculiar to Chriſtianity, if the New Teſtament did command it in the Senſe which our Author urges ſo often, and of which we have ſufficiently warned the contrary.

VI.

In the *Fifth* Article of this ſecond Letter, our Author ſays in poſitive Terms, *That the Body has no Occaſion for the Thoughts of the Soul to be moved.* Some People do not ſcruple to own this to be true, of all the bodily Motions of Thinking Beings; but no Man can deny it of the mix'd Operations in the Body, ſuch as the Circulation of the Blood, and Reſpiration, which are

are in a Manner Involuntary, and proceed as regularly during Sleep as whilſt Man is awake; and are not quite aboliſh'd in Apoplexies or the like Diſeaſes, though all the Sences be for that time in a forc'd Inaction, occaſion'd by a mere Corporeal and Mechanical Cauſe; ſuch as the Obſtruction of the Nerves in the *Cerebrum*, through which the Animal Spirits cannot circulate, and, as uſual, be convey'd to the ſeveral Ramifications taking their riſe from it, whilſt the *Cerebellum*, whence the Nerves communicate and carry Spirits to the Heart and Lungs, is in its Natural State, and free from Obſtructions.

But the Second Aſſertion, viz. *That the Soul has no need of the Motions of the Body to Think*, is not only *begging the Queſtion, and* before-hand affirming, *That the Soul is a Being ſeparately Exiſtent from the Body*, but it is contradicted by ſelf-evident Arguments and Experience. What Signs of a Soul, I pray, in Infants, or of what Uſe is the Soul to them? Is there any *Operation* perform'd by them, that deſerves to be called a *Thought*, or (which is the ſame thing) which argues them to *Think*? Do not thoſe Operations or *Thought-like Actions* viſibly improve in them, in Proportion as their Bodies and bodily Organs advance

vance in Strength and Perfection, Is it not too common to ſee Children brought into an utter Incapacity of ever Thinking, either by Fits in their tender Infancy, or by a ſqueeze upon the weak Skull at the time of their Birth? Doth not Experience ſhew, that if Families for ſeveral Generations ſucceſſively inter-marry, that there will not only be a great Reſemblance of Features and Shapes, but a Likeneſs alſo in their Underſtandings and Paſſions? Witneſs the Jews to this Day diſpers'd over the Face of the Earth. A Truth ſo evident that many Divines have not ſcrupled to affirm, *That the Soul is begotten* ex traduce *by the Parents as well as the Body.* To conclude this Argument; What is more obvious than to ſee the *Thinking Faculty* debaſed in Feavers, and and even annihilated for a while in Apoplexies, and ſeveral other Diſeaſes of the Brain, ſo as even to loſe for ever the Memory of all precedent Actions and former Times. It is plain what Conſequence may hence be drawn againſt our Author, and I leave it therefore to the Reader himſelf to do.

VII.

VII.

I could never have thought that the Author of *Telemachus* would have ſaid, *That the Aſſertors of the Doctrine of Neceſſity ought to be puniſh'd by the Civil Magiſtrate, inſtead of being allow'd to debate it in the Univerſities and Schools.* I would fain ask any Zealot, what Harm diſputing about Liberty and Neceſſity can do either to Religion or the State? And what Subject has been at all times more debated among Divines, though perhaps not by that very Title? What was the Ground of the Diſpute between thoſe called Orthodox and the *Pelagians* and *Semipelagians* many Ages ago? between the *Remonſtrants* and *Contra-Remonſtrants* in *Holland* at the famous Synod of *Dort*; and between the *Janſeniſts*, *Moliniſts* and *Jeſuits* in our very Author's Days? Was he pleas'd at the Treatment of the *Janſeniſts*? I ſuppoſe there may be about one in a thouſand in every Nation, who will ſeriouſly enquire into this Subject, and know how to draw Conſequences from either; yet as they cannot avoid expreſſing themſelves in Philoſophical Terms, according to the Nature of the Subject, which is very abſtruſe, it follows, That neither Religion nor the

Clergy

Clergy can loſe any thing by the Debate. Why then, to urge the Civil Power, to intermeddle with the Studies of a ſmall Number of Philoſophers, who commonly have no other View than the Satisfaction of examining a dark Subject as far as they are able? Did not the Archbiſhop of *Cambray* think it hard, when he was baniſh'd the Court and cenſur'd by *Rome*, for his Favourite Opinion of Divine Love, which in its Conſequences is certainly more deſtructive of Morality than what he ſo ſeverely cenſures? Certainly he was: He ought therefore to have known, *That Perſecution is allowable, neither in Religion nor true Politicks, on the Account of no Opinions whatſoever, provided they do not neceſſarily tend to the Subverſion or very great Diſturbance of Societies.* The only Excuſe, and that is not a very good one, I can think of for our Author, is, that *Cicero* came in his way, and he had juſt then an itch to quote him.

VIII.

In the Third Letter, our Author is very diffuſe, in endeavouring to prove, That *no ſort of Motion*, can at any Time cauſe a not-thinking Being to become a Thinking One; and thus concludes, *Dares any*

any one ſay, That there is a Degree of Fermentation, and a fix'd Moment of Time, when a peculiar heap of Matter has neither Underſtanding nor Will; but that there is occaſion for one laſt Degree of Fermentation more, and that on the very next inſtant, That heap of Matter will on a ſudden begin to judge, to will, and to ſay to it ſelf, I believe, and I will. I anſwer, yes. For ſuppoſing, *The firſt Cauſe of all Motion to be God; The ſecond Cauſes,* which are *Matter it ſelf,* perform *unknowingly,* but *mechanically,* all the Motions and Operarations, which *end* in all the Productions in the Univerſe; of Minerals, Plants, Animals, and Man himſelf. In ſhort, a *not-thinking Being,* ſuch as the Seed of the Male, or the *Ovum* of the Female, or both, being put in ſuch Circumſtanſtances, as from *Anatomy* we learn they are, is the *mechanical,* though *ignorant Cauſe* of the *Embryo,* which becomes a *Fœtus,* then an *Infant,* and, as I ſaid above, when all his Organs are come to a ſufficient Degree of Strength, Proportion and Perfection, *it begins at a certain Moment,* unknown to us, and to it ſelf, to be *capable of Thinking*; forming at firſt very *ſimple,* but by Degrees more and more

more *compound Ideas*, aſcending from thoſe of *Senſation* to thoſe of *Reflection*.

IX.

Before our Author enters into the Argument, concerning the Nature of an *Infinite*, and the Liberty of God to Create, or not Create; he expreſſes himſelf thus, *I begin immediately with ſtopping ſhort in a Philoſophical Debate, as ſoon as I meet with a Point of* Faith, *that contradicts ſome* Philoſophical Thought, *which I am tempted to approve: Without heſitating in the leaſt,* I prefer God's Reaſon to mine, *and the beſt uſe I can make of* my ſmall Underſtanding, *is to give it up to* his Authority: *So that without hearkning* to my ſelf, *I only give ear to* that Revelation *which* the Church *hands down* to me, *and I deny all that the* Church *bids me deny.* Here I muſt again take Leave to obſerve, That this way of Reaſoning will not do with *Unbelievers*, and is needleſs to ſuch Believers who have an equal Veneration for Traditions, as for the Scriptures and Revelation: Beſides, This may indeed ſhield *our Author* from the Imputation of *believing nothing but what his Reaſon cou'd attain to*; but the famous *Bayle* was never believ'd, when he made the ſame Declaration,

ration, pretending to ſubmit all his Philoſophy to the Authority of the *Synod of Dort*: But to come nearer to the Argument; It is moſt certain, That *Revelation cannot deceive*; but before we can build upon it, muſt we not uſe our *Reaſon* to prove that *Revelation*? Doth not our Author own, that to admit of a Revelation without good and ſure Proofs is a mere Fanaticiſm? Therefore, if Revelation is to be prov'd from Reaſon, it is evident, that we ſuppoſe, That *true and ſound Reaſon can no more deceive, than Revelation it ſelf*; conſequently, *they are never to be mention'd as two Oppoſites*: Beſides, after we have made our ſelves ſure, That God has reveal'd himſelf to Man, we muſt moreover make our ſelves ſure of the Senſe of that Revelation, which again requires Reaſoning. If the *Church* ſhou'd give to *Revelation* a Senſe quite contrary to *Reaſon*, Muſt we in that Caſe believe the Church? No to be ſure; ſince the Reaſons to move us to give our Aſſent to the Determinations of the Church cannot be weightier than what we are evidently taught by ſound Reaſon, upon which in the End we muſt confeſs that all is grounded: ſo that we muſt indeed allow, That we are under

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an Obligation to ſubmit to *God's Reaſon*; but ſince *Human Reaſon* is deriv'd from it, *thoſe two Reaſons can never be oppoſite to each other*: If we ſeem to meet with a Contradiction, it is certainly becauſe we attribute ſomething, either to the one or the other, which in good Logick we ſhou'd not.

X.

Our Author, at the Concluſion of his Argument about God's Liberty to Create, or not Create, ſpeaks thus, *The Glory of God, from the Creation, was accidental*; which, if it means any Thing at all, is as if he had ſaid, That ſince God was intirely free to Create, or not to Create; ſince the Ballance was in Equilibrio, when either was put in the Scale; and that the Scale for *Creating*, did by mere accident out-weigh the other *for not Creating*; conſequently, The *Glory* which God has gain'd and propos'd to himſelf *by Creating*, was alſo *Accidental*; which *Glory* God had not acquir'd, *if the Ballance for not Creating, had accidentally over-pois'd that which was for Creating.*

But, ſaith our Author, *It was the mere Choice of his Will*; he was not forc'd from any

any Conſideration whatever, to prefer the one before the other; he was as much unbyaſs'd as any intelligent Being can be in the Choice of two Eggs, that are like each other in all poſſible and apparent Circumſtances, according to the Proverb, *Ovum ovo non eſt ſimilius.*

To ſtrengthen which Concluſion, he adds, *That God's infinite Superiority above his Work, is the Cauſe, why he has no Manner of Occaſion for his Work*: That is to ſay, God had been equally perfect, equally happy, equally infinite, *without that Acceſſion of Glory*: as he has ſince been *with it*: Yet ſaith the Author, His Will did chuſe to make that Addition of being a *Glorious God* to his other Attributes.

For the Eſteem I bear to the Author's Memory, I wiſh I could find out a Way to clear him of Contrradiction: For, *if at any time God was not a glorious God*, either, *to be a glorious God is but a mere Sound*; in which Caſe, Revelation would not have declared, That *God is ſo far jealous of his Glory*, as to damn eternally ſuch as ſhould give his Glory to another: Or, *To be a glorious God is ſomething Real.* If *ſomething Real*, the Infinite, Perfect Being, *could never be without it*; conſequently, it was not

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an *accidental* Attribute, but a *neceſſary* one, a very Conſtituent of his Divinity; conſequently, *God was always under a Neceſſity of being a glorious God*, &c. It will avail but little, to ſay in this Caſe, That God had it always in his Power to make himſelf glorious, whenevever he ſhould pleaſe; ſince it was alſo accidental, whether he would ever pleaſe to make that Tranſition *a poſſe ad eſſe*; the Difficulty remains the ſame. If it is anſwered, That we muſt not judge of the Actions of God by the ſame Rule, as we judge of our own; that may in ſome Meaſure be granted: But it is as true, That we muſt not affirm contradictory things of God, or ſpeak of him in an unintelligible Jargon; ſince all *our Ideas* are only *right*, as they are *faint Copies* of his own, and only *wrong*, as they *deviate from the Original.*

To end this Argument, I beg Leave only to ask this Queſtion.

Is it very eaſy to any one, *To conceive a Being Almighty, and All-Good, who ſhould never, during all Eternity, make Uſe of his Power, and never Create any thing to communicate his Goodneſs to?*

And is it not much more commendable, to wave all theſe Queſtions, as too much

much beyond the Reach of the Multitude, minding chiefly the Practical Duties of Religion, which are of an Eternal Truth?

XI.

It would have been eaſy to have made a greater Number of Obſervations, without ſeeming to affect the Name of a *Critick*: But as the Excellence of this ſmall Treatiſe is infinitely beyond its Defect, I conclude with only this ſmall Addition, which I take to be the higheſt Commendation, That through the whole, and chiefly at the very latter End, he ſeems to have dictated to the Biſhop of *Bangor*, all which that great and good Man doth maintain, about Eccleſiaſtical Ceremonies, about Prayers, and the eſſential Conſtituent of true Religion (*Sincerity*,) againſt a Pack of hypocritical, double-minded, and ambitious Prieſts, who ſeem to breath e nothing but *Popery and Perſecution*.

POSTSCRIPT.

UPon writing to the Abbot *de Fenelon*, that this Treatiſe was publiſhing in *Engliſh*, I deſir'd he would be pleas'd to communicate to us whatever Memoirs he ſhould be able or pleaſed to collect, relating to the Life of his Uncle, the Arch-Biſhop of *Cambray*, and in particular to this Treatiſe, He ſent me the following Letter; of which you have here the Tranſlation, as the Original is in my Cuſtody. If the Abbot makes his Promiſe therein good, the Publick ſhall not fail of having it communicated.

To Dr. Delacoſte.

" YOu was not miſtaken, Sir, when " you applied to me, who " am the eldeſt of the Nephews, and of " the Name of the late Arch-Biſhop of " *Cambray*, and have been continually " with him for the Space of two and " twenty Years. It will be a great Plea- " ſure to me, Sir, to truſt into ſuch good " Hands as yours, whatever may be ca- " pable of perpetuating the Memory of " ſo dear an Uncle; to whom it is glo- " rious, that a *Nation ſo wiſe, ſo witty, ſo* " *well conſtituted, and ſo learned as the* " Engliſh *are*, has honoured him both in " his Life-time, and ſince his Deceaſe. " I have been a Witneſs of what the il- " luſtrious *Marlborough* has done, to ſhow " him, how much himſelf, and all that " were with him, valued and loved the " Author of *Telemachus*.

" But ſetting out juſt now for *Cam-* " *bray*, which is my uſual Abode and " Settlement, all I can do, is to deſire the

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" Marqueſs *de Fenelon*, my Brother, to
" furniſh you with whatever Inſtru-
" ctions he ſhall be able. When I ar-
" rive at *Cambray*, I'll try if I can get
" Materials together for a ſixth Letter
" as an Appendix to this Treatiſe;
" wherein I ſhall be extreamly glad to
" repeat to you how much I am,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient humble Servant,

The Abbot de Fenelon.

Paris, 18 *Febr.*
1718-9.

FINIS.